THE
PRESENT TRUTH:

A
DISPLAY

OF THE

SECESSION-TESTIMONY;
IN THE
THREE PERIODS
OF THE

RISE, STATE, AND MAINTENANCE
of that TESTIMONY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME I,
Containing the RISE and STATE of the Secession-
Testimony

WITH A TWOFOLD APPENDIX:
Vi z.

I. Concerning the present RE-
NOVATION of our SOLEMN
COVENANTS.

II. The SYNOD-SERMON, which
occasioned the Process that
issued in the Secession.

Ye should earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints. Jude, v.3.

Established in the PRESENT TRUTH.

2 Pet.i.12.

EDINBURGH:
Printed by R. Fleming and A. Neill.
M.DCC.LXXIV.
The

Preface

A distinguished place, among the Gentile Nations which have been subjected to the scepter of Jesus Christ, was the early privilege of Scotland: And since the first possession which he graciously took of this Land, he has never suffered the interests of his Kingdom in it to be quite abolished. He made glorious appearances on that side, in the former periods of Reformation: And, after a woful apostasy from the attainments of those periods, he hath set up a new standard for himself,—in the Secession-Testimony.

All the opposition which has been made to this Testimony, is principally founded upon a misrepresentation of it. The principal defence of it must therefore lie, in giving a proper display of facts concerning it; and of the principles which it contains. And this is now proposed to be done, with such brevity as the subject may properly admit of; according to the three different periods of that Testimony.

It has hitherto been laid out, only in a succession of pamphlets; which, beside that they are of a more perishable nature than books,—are to be found complete but in few hands. And it must be an advantage, to have the matter of them contracted
contracted and methodized, with proper Explications,—into a more comprehensive and uniform view, than can be had in the perusal of these Pamphlets.— At the same time, the Writer of this Display reckons an endeavour of that sort peculiarly incumbent on him; from the early* and special concern he has had in the Secession cause,—giving him occasion for particular acquaintance

*HAVING entered to the University of Edinburgh in Winter 1730; he was present, during the next three years,— in most, if not all the meetings of the General Assemblies and their Commissions: And, from what he observed at some of these meetings, he came to a resolution in Winter 1732,—to acknowledge no connection with the Judicatories of the established Church, according to the state which he saw them in; while then in no connection or acquaintance with any of the Ministers who afterwards composed the Associate Presbytery. When the Synod of Perth and Stirling, in October 1735, enrolled the Intruder into the Parish of Muckhart (to which he belonged); he gave in to that Synod, a Declaration of Secession from them and all the other Judicatories of the established Church,—some Commissioners from that Parish doing the like: Of which Declarations they got extracts from the Synod-clerk; the same having been admitted into the Records, for the purpose of having Answers made to them which might prevent a following of that example,—though any Answers, as is supposed, have never yet been agreed upon. In December following, the extracts of these Declarations of Secession were laid before the Associate Presbytery,—with Declarations of Accession to them; which were then received, the first ever received by them. And he was present in most of the meetings of that Presbytery afterwards; till, having been licenced by them on the 5th of March 1740,—he was admitted to a seat in it, as ordained at Edinburgh, on the 2nd of April 1741: Since which time, he has been kept in the way of exerting his capacity for the service of the Secession-Cause.—And he considers it as the distinguishing happiness of his earthly condition,—that he has been so far kept in this way, as to render him a principal butt for the arrows of its adversaries from all quarters; particularly, as to the malignant abuse committed upon him by a late Writer, (among some others),—whom he will have ado with in the end of this, and also of the next Volume. It is an honour, as a strong presumption of being on the Lord’s side,—to meet with such usage from one of that Writer’s complexion.
quaintance with it, more than any other member now remaining in the Associate Synod.

THE first generation of Seceders is now mostly off the field: And the new generation is ready to lose sight, in a great measure, of the Cause which they profess; partly through want of ready information: It is therefore considered, not only as a piece of justice to that Cause before the world, (and a necessary information for posterity),—but also as a matter of duty to the friends of it; that such a Display be made thereof, as is now proposed.

As to those Pamphlets which respect the Rise of the Secession-Testimony,—such an account is given of them, and generally in the language there used, as was reckoned necessary and sufficient for a proper view of the matter. The Judicial Testimony, with the Acknowledgement of Sins and Engagement to Duties,—as also the Declaration and Defence of the Associate Presbytery’s Principles concerning the present Civil Government; these are given entire, as they could not properly admit of being abridged. But an Abstract of the Declinature was reckoned sufficient, as also of the Act for renewing our Covenants; with an Abridgment of the Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace, in the very terms of that Act.

As to what is new of this Work, plainness and perspicuity are intended; with such precision of language, as may both consist with and contri-
bute to these ends. But it is not to be supposed,—that anything can be got so expressed, as to be proof against the arts of misconstruction and wrestling; according to that singular impudence of malignity and weakness, which belongs to the present way of writing against the Associate Synod and the Cause among their hands.—Modern elegance or purity of stile, in a conformity to the usage of South-Britain,—is what the Writer pretends to little capacity, and has as little inclination for: While he is not like to be ashamed of Scoticisms, till he become ashamed of being a Scotsman. Some terms and phrases peculiar to North-Britain, which have of late years become much antiquated there, (chiefly in the aforesaid Declaration and Defence),—the Writer was scrupulous to use the freedom of altering: And so they are yet continued as in the original publications; because the context, it is supposed, will sufficiently clear the sense,—to any who understand the English language.

SOON after the publication of the Judicial Testimony, and before proceeding to licence any young men,—the Associate Presbytery agreed upon a new Formula, chiefly for Ordination-vows; in place of that which they left belonging to the established Church: And it is here subjoined; as it may be afterwards referred to, by

ADAM GIB.

EDINBURGH:

Nov. 25. 1773.
The ORDINATION-VOWS in the Secession:

O R

The FORMULA of Questions, originally framed and settled by the ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY,— (which were all along maintained by them, and are still maintained by the ASSOCIATE SYNOD); for being put, at the Ordination of Ministers and Elders,—as also, at the licensing of young men to preach the Gospel.

N.B. The following Questions, as common to MINISTERS and PROBATIONERS and ELDERS, and as peculiar to some or any of them,—are distinguished by Titles prefixed to the several Questions.

[For MINISTERS, PROBATIONERS and ELDERS.]

Question I.
Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the word of God, and the only rule of faith and manners?

Question II.
Do you sincerely own and believe the whole doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith compiled by the Assembly of Divines who met at Westminster, with Commissioners from the Church of Scotland,—as the said Confession was received and approved by an act of Assembly 1647, Session 23; and likewise the whole doctrine contained in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, compiled by the said Westminster Assembly;—to be founded upon the word of God: And do you acknowledge the said Confession as the Confession of your Faith: And will you, through grace, firmly and constantly adhere to the doctrine of the said Confession and Catechisms,—and, to the utmost of your power, assert, maintain and defend the same; against all Deistical, Popish, Arian, Socinian, Arminian, Neonomian, Antinomian, and other doctrines, tenets and opinions whatsoever, contrary to or inconsistent with
with the said Confession and Catechisms;—and particularly against the many gross and dangerous errors vented and maintained by Messrs Simson and Campbell; which are specified and condemned in the judicial Act and Testimony emitted by the Associate Presbytery, [now the Associate Synod*]?

Question III.
Are you persuaded that the Lord Jesus Christ, the alone King and Head of his Church, hath appointed a particular form of government to take place therein,—distinct from Civil Government, and not subordinate to the same; and that the Presbyterial Church-Government, without any superiority of office above a teaching Presbyter, in the due subordination of judicatories, (such as of Kirk-Sessions to Presbyteries, of Presbyteries to Provincial Synods, and of Provincial Synods to General Assemblies),—is the only form of government laid down and appointed by the Lord Christ in his word, to continue in his Church to the end of the world unalterable;—which accordingly has been owned and received by the Church of Scotland, as the only government of divine institution and appointment; as is evident from the Covenants, National and Solemn League, which this Church and land, have sworn and come under to the Most High God; and from many of her public acts and constitutions, particularly from the second Book of Discipline,—and the propositions concerning Church-Government, as the said propositions were received and approved by an act of Assembly 1645, session 16: And do you promise to submit to the said government and discipline,—and never to endeavour, directly or indirectly, the prejudice or subversion thereof; but that you will, to the utmost of your power in your station, during all the days of your life, maintain, support and defend the same,—together with the purity of worship received and practiced in this Church; against all Erastian, Prelatic, Sectarian, or other tenets, opinions or forms of worship and government, whatsoever,—contrary to or inconsistent with the said covenanted worship, government and discipline,—

*The inclosed words were added, at the erection of the Associate Synod.
pline,—sworn to in our Covenants, National and Solemn League?

**Question IV.**

Do you own and acknowledge the perpetual obligation of the National Covenant, frequently sworn and subscribed by persons of all ranks in this kingdom; and particularly as explained by the General Assembly 1638, to abjure the hierarchy and the five articles of Perth: Do you likewise own and acknowledge the perpetual obligation of the Solemn League and Covenant, for maintaining and carrying on a work of reformation in the three kingdoms,—sworn and subscribed by all ranks in Scotland and England, in the year 1643; and particularly as renewed in Scotland, with an Acknowledgment of sins and an Engagement to duties, in the year 1648:—And do you promise, through grace, to adhere to these Covenants; and, in your station, to prosecute the ends of them?

**Question V.**

Do you approve of the Act, Declaration and Testimony, — for the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government of the Church of Scotland; enacted and emitted by the Associate Presbytery: And do you in your judgment disapprove of the several steps of defection, both in former and present times, condemned in the said Act; as contrary to the word of God, the Confession of Faith, the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant of the three Nations?

**Question VI.**

[For MINISTERS and PROBATIONERS.]

Do you promise that you will submit yourself willingly and humbly, in the spirit of meekness,—unto the admonitions of the brethren of this Presbytery, agreeable to the word of God; and to be subject to them in the Lord, [and to the other Presbyteries of the Association, and the Associate Synod, as the Lord in his Providence shall cast your lot*]: And do you promise that you will maintain

*The inclosed words were added, at the erection of the Associate Synod.
the spiritual unity and peace of, and that you will follow no divisive course from the reformed and covenanted Church of Scotland; either by falling in with the defections of the times, or by giving yourself up to a detestable indifferency and neutrality in the foresaid covenanted cause;—and this you promise through grace, notwithstanding of whatever trouble or persecution you may meet with in essaying the faithful discharge of your duty herein?

[For ELDERS.]

Do you promise that you will submit yourself willingly and humbly, in the spirit of meekness, unto the admonitions of the brethren of the Session in this congregation: And do you promise that you will maintain the spiritual unity and peace of, and that you will follow no divisive course from the reformed and covenanted Church of Scotland; either by falling in with the defections of the times, or by giving yourself up to a detestable indifferency and neutrality in the foresaid covenanted cause;—and this you promise through grace, notwithstanding of whatever trouble or persecution you may meet with in essaying the faithful discharge of your duty herein?

Question VII.

[For MINISTERS.]

Are not zeal for the honour and glory of God, love to the Lord Jesus Christ, and desire of being instrumental in edifying and saving souls,—your great motives and chief inducements to enter into the function of the holy Ministry; and not any selfish views or worldly designs or interest?

[For PROBATIONERS.]

Are not zeal for the, honour and glory of God, love to the Lord Jesus Christ, and desire of being instrumental in edifying and saving souls,—your great motives and chief inducements to accept of a licence to preach the Gospel as a Probationer for the holy Ministry; and not any selfish views, or worldly designs or interest?
[For ELDERS]

Are not zeal for the honour and glory of God, love to the Lord Jesus Christ, and desire of being instrumental in the edification of his body,—your great motives and chief inducements to enter into the office of Eldership in this congregation; and not any selfish views, or worldly designs or interest.

*Question VIII.*

[For MINISTERS.]

Have you used any undue methods, either by yourself or others, in procuring this call to the Ministry?

[For ELDERS.]

Have you used any undue methods, either by yourself or others, in procuring your call to the office of Eldership in this congregation?

*Question IX.*

[For MINISTERS.]

Do you engage, in the strength and grace of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, to rule well your own family, [if it shall please the Lord to give you one*]; and to live an holy and circumspect life,—following after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness: And do you engage, in the strength of the same grace,—faithfully, diligently and cheerfully to discharge all the part of the ministerial work, to the edification of the body of Christ?

[For PROBATIONERS.]

Do you engage, in the strength and grace of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, to live an holy and circumspect life, — following after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness; and to preach the Gospel, wherever you shall be called, faithfully and honestly,—not with the

enticing

*The inclosed words are to be used as there is occasion.
enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in the purity and simplicity thereof, not ceasing to declare the whole counsel of God;—as also to catechise the people and visit the sick, as you shall have access and opportunity: And to perform whatever other duties are incumbent on you from the word of God, as a Probationer for the holy Ministry; in order to the convincing and reclaiming of sinners, and the edifying and building up of the body of Christ?

[For ELDERS.]

Do you engage, [each of you*] in the strength and grace of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, to rule well your own family, [and you—if it shall please the Lord to give you one*]; and to live an holy and circumspect life,—following after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

Question X

[For MINISTERS.]

Do you accept of, and close with the call to be Pastor of this Associate Congregation; and promise, through grace, to perform all the duties of a faithful Minister of the Gospel among this people,—in preaching the Gospel among them, not with the enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in the purity and simplicity thereof,—not ceasing to declare unto them the whole counsel of God; as also in catechizing, exhorting from house to house, visiting the sick: And performing whatever other duties or means are incumbent on you from the word of God, as a faithful Minister of Jesus Christ; for the convincing and reclaiming of sinners, and for the edifying and building up of the body of Christ?

[For ELDERS.]

Do you accept of, and close with your call to the office of Eldership in this congregation: And do you engage, through grace, diligently and cheerfully to discharge all the parts of the office of the Eldership; as to whatever duties

*The inclosed words are to be used as there is occasion.
duties or means are incumbent upon and competent unto you in that office, for the edifying and building up of the body of Christ in this congregation?*

And all these things you promise and engage unto, through grace,—as you will be answerable, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his Saints; and as you would desire to be found among that happy company, at his glorious appearing?

*Two other Questions, were added to this Formula by the Associate Synod, in April 1747; as comes properly to be set forth in the next Volume. But these Questions may be here subjoined, viz.

[For Ministers, Probationers, and Elders.]

Question XI.

Are you satisfied with, and do you purpose to adhere unto and maintain the principles about the present Civil Government,—which are declared and maintained in the Associate Presbytery’s answers to Mr Nairn’s reasons of dissent, with the defence thereto subjoined?

Question XII.

Do you acknowledge and promise subjection to this Presbytery in subordination to the Associate Synod, [as to Elders; it runs;—the Session of this Congregation, in subordination to the Associate Presbytery of—, and to the Associate Synod],—as presently constituted in a way of testifying against the sinful management of the prevailing party in the Synod, at some of the first diets of their meeting at Edinburgh in April 1747; or other Presbyteries in that subordination, as you shall be regularly called [This clause is omitted as to Elders];—and do you approve of, and purpose to adhere unto and maintain the said testimony, in your station and capacity: And do you approve of, and purpose to adhere unto and maintain,—the sentence of Synod in April 1746, concerning the religious clause of some Burgess-oaths; and that in opposition to all tenets and practices to the contrary?
[The following Act may properly have a place, after the preceding Formula.]

Edinburgh, August 26. 1761.

The Associate Synod calling for the Report of the proceedings of their Committee of Overtures, the following Overture was given in and read, viz.

"That the Synod would consider of some proper method of cautioning those under their inspection who may be pointing towards public work in the Church, against an affected pedantry of stile and pronunciation and politeness of expression, in delivering the truths of the Gospel,—as being an using the enticing words of man’s wisdom, and inconsistent with that gravity which the weight of the matter of the Gospel requires; and as proceeding from an affectation to accommodate the Gospel in point of stile, which (if not prevented) may at length issue in attempts to accommodate it also in point of matter,—to the corrupted taste of a carnal generation: And that they would recommend it to all the Ministers of this Synod, to shew a suitable pattern in this matter; endeavouring in their public Ministrations, by the manifestation of the truth in plainness and gravity, to recommend themselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God: And that at the same time the Synod give caution,—against all such meanness and impropriety of language, as hath a tendency to bring discredit upon the Gospel; as also against using technical, philosophical and learned terms, that are not commonly understood."

The above Overture being again read, and reasoned upon; the Synod agreed, without a vote,—in appointing, recommending and cautioning accordingly. And further, they recommend to the several Presbyteries,—to have an extract of this act ingrossed in their respective books; and to be careful to conform thereto, in the licensing of young men.

A LIST
A LIST of the several Pamphlets which contain the Rise and State of the Secession-Testimony, and from which the Display in this Volume is made: With the years in which they were published; and the Octavo pages (some in very small and close print) of which they consist.

I. A List of the Pamphlets which contain the Rise of the Secession-Testimony.

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3. Act of the Associate Presbytery, concerning the Doctrine of Grace.---1744.

4. Act of the Associate Presbytery, for Renewing the National Covenant of Scotland; and the Solemn League and Covenant of the Three Nations.---1744.

5. Answers by the Associate Presbytery to [Papers given in to them by] Mr Thomas Nairn; together with a Declaration and Defence of their Principles anent the present Civil Government.---1744.

The only escapes of the Press that have been observed, which might any way incommode the Reader,---are to be corrected as follows, viz.

Page 58. **Note** line 4. for an read on
   63. l.33. for pretended read pretend
   110.l.26. dele and
   114.note l.2. read Rom. i.II.
   182.l.13. for sense read faith
   1.14. for faith read sense
   227.l.19. for 1749 read 1649
   312.1.5. for 6 read 16.

A Note omitted at the foot of p. 144, is placed at the foot of p. 164. It is a mistake of numbering the pages, at p. 167,---which is corrected at p. 225.

As to some mistakes of smaller moment,
Page vii.l.26 read **Doctrine**
   63.l.22. read horribly
   80.l.23. read unparalleled
   280.l.7. read peculiarly
   350.l.4. read Covenanting-work
   397.l.2. for Th read The

In some places for maintainance read maintenance.

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THE
THE

PRESENT TRUTH:

A

DISPLAY

OF THE

SECESSION-TESTIMONY;

In the THREE PERIODS of the RISE, STATE, and MAINTENANCE of that Testimony.

PERIOD I.

The RISE of the Secession-Testimony.

At a time when night-darkness had proceeded very far, in our land,—with regard to the interests of religion, and of the Reformation-cause; the Lord was mercifully pleased to effectuate the dawning of a new day, in the RISE of the Secession-Testimony. As,

I. The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, in May 1731, had an overture before them,—concerning the method of planting vacant churches: A kind of supplement to the law of patronage; being proposed as a rule for the settlement of congregations where patrons should neglect, or be pleased to wave the exercise of their right.

According to this overture, Ministers were not to be chosen by congregations; but were to be imposed upon them, by the majority in a conjunct meeting of heritors and
and elders: And all heritors were to be admitted of as voters in that meeting, under the simple qualification of being Protestants.—This overture the Assembly transmitted to the several presbyteries; that they might return their opinion to the next Assembly, whether it should be turned into a standing act: And they enjoined the presbyteries to observe it, in the mean time.

II. At next Assembly in May 1732, it was found that eighteen of the presbyteries had returned no opinion concerning the overture; that twelve were for it, only upon condition of some material amendments: That only six were absolutely for it; and that thirty-one presbyteries were absolutely against it. At the same time two representations of grievances were offered to the Assembly; one by forty-two Ministers*, and another by upwards of seventeen hundred Christian people: Both of them remonstrating, among other things, against the aforesaid overture. But the Assembly refused to hear these representations: And notwithstanding the state of the returns from the presbyteries, they turned the overture into a standing act,—without any material amendment; refusing to restrict the vote of heritors to such as had a residence within the parish, or to such as were of the communion of the Church of Scotland: Refusing also to take any notice, in their records, first of a dissent from this act, and then of a protest against it,—by several ministers and elders, members of the Assembly.

III. The Reverend Mr Ebenezer Erskine, Minister of the Gospel at Stirling, one of these dissenters and protesters,—preached a sermon at the opening of the Synod of Perth and Stirling, in October that same year: On which occasion, he used the freedom of testifying against some public evils; particularly the aforesaid act of Assembly,—and the proceedings of the church-judicatories, in the violent set-

tlements

*The four brethren, mentioned in the next paragraph, were of that number: as also other four, who afterwards acceded to them in the Associate Presbytery, viz. The Reverend Messrs Ralph Erskine, Minister of the Gospel at Dunfermline, Thomas Mair at Orwell, James Thomson at Burntisland, and Thomas Nairn at Abbotshall.
tlements of Ministers: For which the Synod judged him censurable, after much debate, by a plurality of six voices. The Reverend Mr Alexander Moncrieff, Minister of the Gospel at Abernethy, dissented from and protested against this sentence of the Synod: in which he was adhered unto, by the Reverend Mr William Wilson, Minister of the Gospel at Perth; and by ten other Ministers of the Synod. The Reverend Mr James Fisher, Minister of the Gospel at Kinclaven (whom the Synod had excluded from voting in the affair relating to Mr Erskine, in regard Mr Erskine was his father-in-law), did also protest against the sentence; and appealed to the next Assembly. Mr Erskine did likewise protest against that sentence, and appealed to the ensuing General Assembly.—The Synod next determined the censure, to be a rebuke and admonition at their bar: But neither then, nor at their ensuing meeting in April, did they find occasion (through Mr Erskine’s absence) for executing that censure.

IV. While the Assembly was proceeding upon this cause in May 1733, Mr Wilson and Mr Moncrieff insisted for being heard upon their reasons of dissent from the sentence of their own Synod in that affair; which the Assembly thought fit to refuse: And Mr Fisher was precluded from a hearing, by the committee of bills their refusing to transmit his reasons of appeal.—The Assembly having considered Mr Erskine’s appeal, approved the proceedings of the Synod: And they appointed him to be rebuked and admonished by the Moderator at their own bar, in order to terminate the process; which was done accordingly.

Mr Erskine having immediately declared that he could not submit to the rebuke and admonition; he offered a paper for himself, and his three brethren above-mentioned, who attended him at the bar,—craving and protesting that the same might be read, and recorded in the minutes of the Assembly. But the Assembly having represented to them the (pretended) irregularity and danger of such a practice, and desired them to withdraw their paper and protest; they refused to do so, and left it upon the table: The tenor whereof follows.

“PROTEST
“PROTEST by Mr Ebenezer Erskine and others, given in to the Assembly 1733.

“Although I have a very great and dutiful regard to the judicatories of this Church, to whom I own my subjection in the Lord; yet, in respect the Assembly have found me censurable, and have tendered a rebuke and admonition to me, for things I conceive agreeable unto and founded upon the word of God and our approven standards: I find myself obliged to protest against the said censure; as importing that I have, in my doctrine at the opening of the Synod of Perth, October last, departed from the word of God and the foresaid standards: And that I shall be at liberty to preach the same truths of God, and to testify against the same or like defections of this Church, upon all proper occasions. And I do hereby adhere unto the testimonies I have formerly emitted against the act of Assembly 1732; whether in the protest entered against it in open Assembly, or yet in my synodical sermon: craving this my protest and declaration to be insert in the records of the Assembly, and that I may be allowed extracts thereof.

May 14, 1733. EBENEZER ERSKINE.”

“We undersubscribing Ministers, dissenters from the sentence of the Synod of Perth and Stirling, do hereby adhere to the above Protestation and Declaration, containing a testimony against the act of Assembly 1732; and asserting our privilege and duty to testify publicly against the same or like defections, upon all proper occasions. WILLIAM WILSON.
ALEXR. MONCRIEFF.”

“I Mr James Fisher Minister at Kinclaven, appellant against the sentence of the Synod of Perth in this question, although the Committee of Bills did not think fit to transmit my reasons of appeal, find myself obliged to adhere unto the foresaid Protestation and Declaration,

JAMES FISHER.”

Upon
Period I.  

The Process against the four Brethren.

Upon giving in the above-cited paper, these brethren withdrew; and were summoned by the Assembly’s officer, to compear before them next day. At their compearing, and without any question being put to them, a committee was appointed to deal with them; who soon made report, That the four brethren continued fully resolved to adhere to their paper and protest: And immediately, without allowing them to open a mouth at the bar, the Assembly passed the following sentence concerning them.

“The General Assembly ordains, that the four brethren aforesaid appear before the Commission in August next; and then show their sorrow for their conduct and misbehaviour in offering to protest, and in giving in to this Assembly the paper by them subscribed; and that they then retract the same. And in case they do not appear before the said Commission in August, and then show their sorrow and retract as said is; the Commission is hereby impowered and appointed to suspend the said brethren, or such of them as shall not obey, from the

*exercise

*The writer of this account was present in the said Assembly,--particularly intent upon that affair; and observed the matter, according to his best remembrance, at this remarkable pass.—When Mr Erskine had thrown in the paper upon the table, (before the close of the forenoon-sederunt); he and his brethren retired: The paper fell over the table; and the Assembly, without taking any notice of it, proceeded to other business. In this conjuncture, a Minister, who was sitting beside the table, got up the paper: And having looked over it, with an evident kindling in his countenance; he passionately called out for the Assembly to stop, till they should consider the insufferable insult which he reckoned was committed upon them in that paper. It was then read, upon which the Assembly appeared all in a flame; and ordered that their officer should seek out and cite the four brethren to compear before them next forenoon.

The officer got not his orders fulfilled till about an hour before midnight.—And thus, from the time of their leaving the Assembly till they got the summons, (or till they got information of its being appointed),—these brethren must have concluded the matter to be quite over with the Assembly: And must have had no view of carrying it further on their part, than a continuing to testify against public evils in the way of communion with the established Church; according to the liberty which they had protested for.
“exercise of their ministry. And further, in case the said brethren shall be suspended by the said Commission, and that they shall act contrary to the said sentence of suspension; the Commission is hereby impowered and appointed, at their meeting in November, or any subsequent meeting, to proceed to a higher censure against the said four brethren, or such of them as shall continue to offend by transgressing this act. And the General Assembly do appoint the several presbyteries of which the said brethren are members, to report to the Commission in August, and subsequent meetings of it, their conduct and behaviour with respect to this act.”

Upon the intimation of this sentence to them, these brethren, offered to read the following complaint and declaration as their joint speech, viz. “In regard the Venerable Assembly have come to a positive sentence, without hearing our defences; and have appointed the Commission to execute their sentence in August, in case we do not retract what we have done: We cannot but complain of this uncommon procedure; and declare that we are not at liberty to take this affair to an avisandum.” But as the Assembly would not give them a hearing, they left it upon the table under form of instrument†.

V. The four brethren prepared two Representations,—one by Mr Erskine and Mr Fisher, as appellants from the sentence of the Synod of Perth; and another by Mr Wilson and Mr Moncrieff, as protesters against that sentence: And they gave in these Representations to the Commission in August 1733, under form of instrument; insisting upon it as their right, to chuse the way of making their defences by writ, Mr Erskine was allowed, after much opposition,

*That is,—to take a compliance with the Assembly’s sentence under consideration, as to what they were thereby ordained to do.

†The word instrument is used to signify the giving of a piece of money, or the piece of money given to the clerk,—for taking in to the process and recording, any paper or protestation or dissent with which it is given in.
position, to read the first of these representations before them: And as the two brethren concerned in the other representation, could not obtain the like allowance; they delivered the substance of it in speeches at the bar.

These representations contained declarations of their principles; with their reasons, why they could not make a profession of sorrow for, nor retract the protest which they had given in to the late Assembly. They also contained protestations against any censure that might be inflicted on this account; and against any intrusion upon their ministerial labours or pastoral charges, in consequence of such censure: But that it should be lawful and warrantable for them, to exercise their ministry as hitherto they had done,—in regard they were not convicted of departing from any of the received principles of the Church of Scotland, or of counteracting their ordination vows and engagements; and that they should not be chargeable with any bad effects that might follow upon the course taken with them.

Several representations were at the same time offered to the Commission, for a delay of procedure against the four brethren, [viz. By the presbytery of Stirling; by the kirk-session of Stirling; by the Provost, bailies, and town council of Stirling; by the kirk-session of Perth; by the Magistrates and town council of Perth; by the presbytery of Dumblain; and by the presbytery of Ellon]: But the Commission would not suffer any of these representations to be read in their presence.

The issue of the matter was, that the Commission did suspend the four protesting brethren from the exercise of the ministerial function and all the parts thereof; several Ministers and Elders, members of the Commission, dissenting from the deed: And this sentence was intimated to them by the Moderator, not in the name and authority of CHRIST; but in the name and authority of the Assembly and Commission.—Upon this intimation, these brethren gave in the following protestation under form of instrument.

“We hereby adhere to the protestations taken by us before this Court, for ourselves; and in name of all the

“Ministers,
“Ministers, Elders and members of the Church of Scotland, and of all and every one of our respective congregations, adhering to us: Bearing, that this sentence is in itself null and void; and that it shall be lawful and warrantable for us to exercise our ministry as hitherto we have done, and as if no such censure had been inflicted: And that if, in consequence of this sentence, any Minister or probationer shall exercise any part of our pastoral work; the same shall be held and reputed as a violent intrusion upon our ministerial labours. And we do hereby protest for extracts of the papers given in by us, and of the whole of the Commission’s procedure against us; and hereupon we take instruments.

EBENEZER ERSKINE.
WILLIAM WILLSON.
ALEXr. MONCRIEFF
JAMES FISHER.”

And some Elders from their respective kirk-sessions—gave in several protestations against the sentence; testifying their adherence to their Ministers.

VI. When the four brethren compeared before the Commission in November 1733, upon a citation which they had received at the former meeting; they offered to read the following protestation: But, being interrupted, it was laid down upon the table with an instrument.

*Edinburgh, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 1733.*

“We do hereby protest, That our present appearance before the Commission shall not be construed a falling from the declarations we emitted, and the protestations entered, both before and after the executing of the sentence of suspension against us by the Commission at their meeting in August last: To which Protestations and Representations given in by us to the said Commission, we still adhere; and hereupon take instruments.

EBENEZER ERSKINE.
WILLIAM WILLSON.
ALEXr. MONCRIEFF
JAMES FISHER.”
A committee which was appointed to deal with them, for retracing their protestation, reported that they had done so without success. And upon being interrogated, about their obedience to the sentence of the Commission in August; each of them owned that, agreeably to the protestations which they then made,—They had exercised all the parts of their ministerial office as if they had been under no such censure.

Several applications to the Commission, in behalf of the four brethren, were read; made by the Synods of Dumfries, Moray, Ross, Angus and Mearns, Perth and Stirling, Galloway, and Fife,—as also by the presbyteries of Dornock and Aberdeen. At the same time, many members of the Commission insisted for a delay of further procedure against them. But it carried, by the casting vote of Mr John Gowdie Moderator *, to proceed immediately to inflict a higher censure upon the four suspended Ministers: From which sentence, several Ministers and Elders, members of the Commission, dissented.—A Declaration and Protestation, by Mr Ralph Erskine and Mr Thomas Mair, who were not members of the Commission,—was lodged with an instrument in the clerk’s hands: Bearing a testimony against the proceedings of the Assembly and Commission, in the case of the four brethren; and an adherence to them in that cause.

After some further dealing with them by a committee, who reported—that they had declared their resolution to continue of the same mind as formerly; the Commission agreed upon the state of a question,—about losing the relation of the said four Ministers to their several charges, or depositing them simpliciter: And it carried loose, by a great plurality; as a great many members of the Commission had not freedom to vote on either side of the question. Accordingly, on the 16th of November, the Commission passed their final sentence against the four protesting Ministers; as follows.

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* A motion was made at the next diet, to have it marked in the minutes, that this sentence carried only by the Moderator’s casting vote: But this was refused, the motion being vigorously opposed by the Moderator himself and some others; against which refusal, some members of the Commission protested.
“The Commission of the General Assembly did, and hereby do loose the relation of Mr Ebenezer Erskine Minister at Stirling, Mr William Wilson Minister at Perth, Mr Alexander Moncrieff Minister at Abernethy, and Mr James Fisher Minister at Kinclaven, to their said respective charges; and do declare them no longer Ministers of this Church: And do hereby prohibit all Ministers of this Church to employ them, or any of them, in any ministerial function. And the Commission do declare the Churches of the said Mr Erskine, Mr Wilson, Mr Moncrieff and Mr Fisher, vacant from and after the date of this sentence: And appoints that letters from the Moderator, and extracts of this sentence, be sent to the several presbyteries within whose bounds the said Ministers have had their charges; appointing them, as they are hereby appointed, to cause intimate this sentence in the foresaid several Churches, any time betwixt and the first of January next: And also, that notice of this sentence be sent, by letters from the Moderator of this Commission, to the Magistrates of Perth and Stirling, to the Sheriff-principal of Perth, and Bailie of the regality of Abernethy.”

Upon the passing of this sentence, a written Protestation was given in against it, by seven Ministers; among whom were the afore-mentioned Mr Ralph Erskine, Mr Thomas Mair,—and Mr Thomas Nairn.

When the sentence was intimated to the four brethren, they read the following Protestation; and then gave it in to the clerk, with an instrument taken thereupon by every one of them.

“Edinburgh, November 16th, 1733.

“We hereby adhere to the protestation formerly entered before this Court; both at their last meeting in August, and when we appeared first before this meeting. And further, we do protest in our own name, and in the name of all and every one in our respective congregations adhering to us; that, notwithstanding of this sentence, passed against us, our pastoral relation shall be held and reputed firm and valid. And likewise we protest, That, notwithstanding of our being cast out

“from
“from ministerial communion with the established Church of Scotland; we still hold communion with all and every one who desire, with us, to adhere to the principles of the true presbyterian, covenanted Church of Scotland, in her doctrine, worship, government and discipline: And particularly with every one who are groaning under the evils, and who are affected with the grievances we have been complaining of; who are, in their several spheres, wrestling against the same*. But, in regard the prevailing party in this established Church, who have now cast us out from ministerial communion with them, are carrying on a course of defection from our reformed and covenanted principles; and particularly are suppressing ministerial freedom and faithfulness in testifying against the present backslidings of the Church, and inflicting censures upon Ministers for witnessing, by protestations and otherwise, against the same: Therefore we do, for these and many other weighty reasons, to be laid open in due time, protest that we are obliged to make a SECESSION from them; and that we can have no ministerial communion with them, till they see their sins and mistakes, and amend them. And in like manner we do protest, That it shall be lawful and warrantable for us to exercise the keys of doctrine, discipline and government, according to the word of God, and Confession of Faith, and the principles and constitutions of the covenanted Church of Scotland; as if no such censure had been passed upon us: Upon all which we take instruments. And we hereby appeal unto the first free, faithful and reforming General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

EBENEZER ERSKINE.
WILLIAM WILLSON.
ALEXr. MONCRIEFF
JAMES FISHER.”

VII. Upon

*Ministerial communion was maintained, betwixt these four brethren and several Ministers of the established Church, for some years,—till it gradually ceased, betwixt the publication of the Judicial Testimony and the Declinature.
The Secession of the four Brethren.  

Period I.

VII. Upon the sixth day of December that year, the four brethren did constitute themselves into a Presbytery (afterwards known by the name of the ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY), at Gairney-bridge near Kinross; after having spent the precedent, and the most part of that day, in prayer and conference: Mr Ralph Erskine and Mr Thomas Mair being then present with them.

This step they took, in conformity to their present situation,—and in consequence of their late protestation before the Commission; as also for the following reasons: That they might be in a condition and capacity to exercise all the parts of their pastoral office; that they might have a more special claim to the promise of the divine presence among them; that they might maintain proper order among themselves, distinguishing themselves from those of the sectarian and independent way; that they might be in a better capacity for affording help and relief to the oppressed heritage of God through the land; —and that they might endeavour to lift up a judicial as well as a doctrinal testimony for Scotland’s covenanted Reformation; and against the present declinings and backslidings from the same.

VIII. A committee of their number, appointed for that purpose, composed,—and published in March next year, [A Review of the narrative and state of the proceedings of the judicatories against (them), emitted by a committee of the Commission of the General Assembly: Wherein the reasonings of the said narrative are examined, and the representation that is made of the proceedings of the judicatories enquired into].

In this Review they say,—“Our ordination-vows and engagements oblige us to the several steps we have taken*.—Our submission to judicatories is according to

*They had said,—“We are indeed bound, at our ordination, to subject ourselves unto the judicatories of the Church; but it is not an absolute subjection that we engage unto: It is not a blind and implicit obedience that we bind ourselves unto, but a subjection in the Lord; a subjection qualified and limited by the word of God, and the received and known principles of this Church.” Representations, p. 38.—Thus they justly conceived that their obligation, by their ordination-vows,
“the word of God; and our received and approven standards of doctrine, worship, government and discipline: These are the only terms of ministerial communion amongst us; and we refuse that we have broken through any of them.”—“We have continued in ministerial communion with what is reckoned the established Church, till the prevailing party have declared that they will not allow us any longer ministerial communion with them.—The prevailing party have now declared, That they will allow none to continue in ministerial communion with them, who shall testify, either doctrinally from the pulpit or by protestation in the supreme judicatory, against their sinful and unwarrantable proceedings.”—“We have made a secession from the prevailing party,” (whom they described in their next publication to be “a party who have got the management in their hands, and who have got the majority on their side in the judicatories, particularly in our Assemblies and Commissions), who are carrying on the course of defection.”—“Our secession is not from the Church of Scotland: We own her doctrine, contained in her Confession of Faith; we observe the received and approven uniformity of worship; we adhere unto her presbyterian government and discipline, according unto the word of God, and our solemn covenant-engagements;—and we have not been convicted of any thing in doctrine or practice to the contrary.”

IX. A committee of their number, appointed for that purpose, composed,—and published in May following, [A TESTIMONY to the doctrine, worship, government and discipline of the Church of Scotland: We own her doctrine, contained in her Confession of Faith; we observe the received and approven uniformity of worship; we adhere unto her presbyterian government and discipline, according unto the word of God, and our solemn covenant-engagements;—and we have not been convicted of any thing in doctrine or practice to the contrary.]

Testimony

tion vows, to maintain communion with the established Church,—was subordinate to their obligation, by these vows, for maintaining the Reformation-principles: So that the same vows, which did formerly bind them to communion with the established Church,—did now bind them to secession from her; when they could no longer get themselves exonerated with respect to these principles, in a way of communion with her.
Testimony being read all over in presbytery, about six months after the publication of it; they caused to be marked in their minutes—an approbation of it as their Testimony, and as seasonably published.—This was afterwards called the first and extra-judicial Testimony.

This Testimony contained some historical observes on the state of the Church of Scotland, both in her reforming and declining periods: Reasons by the protesting Ministers, for their secession from the prevailing party in the established Church: Reasons for the validity of their pastoral relation to their respective congregations: And reasons for their exercising the keys of government and discipline, according to their protestation entered before the Commission.

The special design of it was, to give reasons for their secession; and these were generally as follows.

1. That the prevailing party were breaking down our beautiful presbyterian constitution: In so much as they had broken down the fences and guards which former General Assemblies had wisely set up, against innovations*;—and had usurped a legislative power and authority over the House of God, in making laws and constitutions that not only have no manner of warrant from the word, but are contrary unto it; and were exercising a lordly and magisterial power over the flock and heritage of God, in binding their decrees upon the consciences of the members of the Church,—by threatening and actually inflicting the highest censures of the Church upon them, if they did not submit to their arbitrary impositions; while the General Assemblies were also supporting the unwarrantable and arbitrary proceedings of their Commissions, in the violent intrusions of Ministers upon congregations.

2. That they were pursuing such measures as did actually corrupt, or had the most direct tendency to corrupt the doctrine

*It had been provided by the Assemblies in the years 1639,—1695, and 1697; That acts which were to be binding rules and constitutions to the Church, should be first transmitted as overtures to the several presbyteries,—and not passed afterwards, without the more general opinion of the Church agreeing thereunto. But, in opposition to this, the act 1732 was passed against the more general opinion of the Church: And an act 1730 (to be mentioned afterwards) was passed, without ever transmitting the same to the several presbyteries—as an overture.
doctrine contained in our excellent Confession of Faith: Particularly with regard to the cases of Mr Simson and Mr Campbell.

3. That sinful and unwarrantable terms of ministerial communion—were imposed; by restraining ministerial freedom and faithfulness, in testifying against the present course of defection and backsliding.

4. That these corrupt courses were carried on with a high hand; notwithstanding that the ordinary means had been used to reclaim them, and to stop the current of the present defection: Instructions, representations and petitions,—from synods, presbyteries, and particular Ministers,—having been disregarded.

5. That matters were come to such a pass in this Church, that they were excluded from keeping up a proper testimony against the corruptions and backslidings of the prevailing party, in a way of ministerial communion with them: As not only had instructions, representations and petitions been disregarded; but both doctrinal and judicial testifying against these corruptions and backslidings, had come to be condemned in their case,—and they cast out on this account.—“Therefore (said they) it is not only warrantable for us, but we are laid under a necessity, to lift up a testimony in a way of secession from them, and against the present current of defection,—that we may not partake with them in their sins; and may do what in us lies to transmit unto succeeding generations, these valuable truths that have been handed down to us, by the contending and wrestlings of a great cloud of witnesses in Scotland, since the dawning of Reformation-light amongst us.”

These reasons being severally enlarged upon, so as to be made good by particular instances,—were confirmed by several passages of Scripture*: And the whole was summed up as follows.

“Seeing the prevailing party in the established Church are “breaking down the necessary fences and guards upon

“our

“our doctrine, worship, government and discipline: Seeing they exercise a **legislative power** and authority over the House of God; by enacting laws **inconsistent** with the laws of Christ, to the hurt, and not the edification of his body: Seeing the prevailing party, by the act 1732; and commonly in all the settlements of Christian congregations, **join themselves** to the avowed enemies of a presbyterian interest, who are suppressing the true friends thereof: Seeing a lordly and **magisterial power** is exercised over the flock of Christ, which he **gathers with his arm** and carries with the greatest tenderness **in his bosom**; by inflicting the highest censures of the Church upon the people of these congregations who cannot submit to the ministry of such as are intruded upon them, and by threatening to inflict the highest censures upon Ministers who dispense sealing ordinances unto them: Seeing Church discipline is exercised after this manner, so as to screen such as are justly censurable, and to **censure** men for the **faithful discharge of their duty**: And seeing prelatic dominion and tyranny has crept in, and is carried on,—by divesting presbyteries of their inherent right and privilege, if they cannot concur in the violent settlement of congregations; and committees are appointed with a presbyterial power, to intrude Ministers upon dissenting and reclaiming congregations; and presbyteries are appointed to receive and inroll such intruded Ministers amongst their members; by all which proceedings, our **presbyterian constitution is subverted**: Seeing also the prevailing party, instead of **contending for the faith once delivered to the saints**, or the purity of doctrine, suffer error to be published without any notice taken thereof: Seeing no due and adequate censure has been inflicted upon erroneous teachers; yea, seeing such are held and kept in ministerial communion with the established Church: Seeing the **prevailing party** have **altered** the terms of ministerial communion; by making every man liable to censure, who adventures to preach against their present deflections: Seeing they have **cast out** thousands from communion with the Church in her sealing ordinances, who cannot join with **intruded hirelings**:
“lings: And seeing these who are intruded into the Ministry, and who are very active in carrying on the present defections, though in the mean time they have no lawful call to act as Ministers of this Church, make up such a considerable part of her judicatories: And seeing, to crown all, the Assemblies of this Church are become so arbitrary in their proceedings of late, as to have no regard to instructions, petitions and representations against a course of defection; but on the contrary do commence processes, do rebuke, admonish, suspend, and threaten higher censures upon Ministers who preach and protest against the above defections: And since Ministers are not only suspended, but cast out from ministerial communion by the prevailing party in the established Church; merely for protesting for their just rights and privileges to testify against these and the like defections; and because they refuse to retract their said protestations, or submit to a more authoritative suspension for their Testimony in a cause of public concern:——We do then upon the whole conceive, that although we have hitherto continued contending and wrestling in a way of church-communion with our brethren; yet now, finding that there is no stop put to the backsliding measures, and that the current of defection runs with such an impetuous torrent; and that we are excluded from keeping up a testimony against their many sinful and unwarrantable proceedings in a way of church-communion with them: Therefore, we judge it our duty to make a secession from ministerial communion with the present prevailing party in the established Church; till they are sensible of their above-mentioned sins and mistakes, and reform and amend the same.”

X. The public evils, against which the four brethren had hitherto been bearing a particular testimony, (expressed and enlarged upon in the True State of the Process,—the Representations, the Review of the Narrative, and the First Testimony),—were these following.

1. The act of Assembly 1732, concerning the method of planting vacant churches.—Against this act (as at first the main ground of their Testimony), they pleaded; that an ecclesiastical trust and privilege was thereby put in-
to the hands of heritors *as such:* That this valuable trust was committed to such heritors as were, not only open and declared enemies to our excellent presbyterian constitution, but disaffected to the protestant succession in the illustrious family of *Hanover:* That heritors, if they bore the name of Protestant, without any other qualification,—though Deists, Arians, Socinians, Arminians, declared enemies to our covenanted Reformation, disaffected to the government in Church and State, and in practice profane and scandalous,—were thereby received into the bosom of the Church, and intrusted with one of her most sacred and valuable rights and privileges; in that great affair of electing Ministers, which relates to the eternal salvation of souls,—and is a principal thing in the external administration of the kingdom of Christ in this world:—That, according to the said act, if the heritors were more numerous than the elders, whether they had their residence in the parish or not, whether they were of the communion of the Church of *Scotland* or not,—they might impose a Minister upon a congregation, though all the elders and people were dissenting and reclaiming; and though all the residing heritors were also reclaiming, if the non-residing heritors were supernumerary to the residing heritors and elders: That a power was thus put into the hands of such as were disaffected to our most valuable interests and privileges, to impose Ministers on all the congregations in *Scotland* where they had the ascendant; while it was frequently the case, that the disaffected heritors were supernumerary to the well-affected heritors and elders:—And that the said act opened a door for the entry of a corrupt Ministry into the Church, as wide as even the patronage-act itself.

2. The violent settlements of Ministers then taking place, through all the corners of this Church:—That the judicatories, particularly the General Assemblies and their Commissions, were filled with such as had been intruded into congregations themselves, or who were the avowed and declared supporters and abettors of violent intrusions: That, accordingly, Ministers were not only intruded through the land, in consequence of the act 1732; but also the patronage-act was much homologated, in the

settlement
settlement of Ministers on the foot of presentations, without the
call and consent of the people of the congregations concerned:
That by such violent intrusions, the great end and design of a
Gospel-Ministry, in the edification of souls, was defeated;
innumerable divisions and convulsions in the body of Christ,
were occasioned; the spirits of the godly grieved, and their
affections alienated; the peace and unity of the Church broken
and ruined; the heritage and flock of Christ wounded, scattered
and broken; and the cry of violence and oppression was
becoming still louder and louder, from all corners of the land:
That such violent settlements were carried on, in opposition to
the declared minds of the presbyteries of the bounds; by
committees of the Commission, or correspondents appointed
from other presbyteries, vested with a presbyterial power to try
and ordain men for the office of the holy Ministry;—the
Commissions thereby depriving presbyteries of their inherent
right and privilege, when they could not concur with them in
intruding Ministers upon the congregations concerned; and for
this purpose erecting a Court with a power of mission unto the
work and office of the Ministry, that had no manner of
foundation in the word of God: And that these unwarrantable
and arbitrary proceedings of the Commission, for some years
by-past,—had been supported and countenanced by the
prevailing party in the General Assemblies.

3. The arbitrary and tyrannical measures by which the
most violent settlements had been enforced:—That presbyteries,
refusing to inroll those intruded upon congregations, were
threatened with the highest censures of the Church: That
neighbouring Ministers were discharged, under the same
penalty, from admitting to sealing ordinances;—the people
groaning under the load of such settlements, who could not
submit to the ministry of intruders; according to an act of
Assembly in May 1733, concerning the Ministers of the
presbytery of Dunfermline: And that thus it was made a term of
Christian communion amongst the members of this Church:—
That they should submit to and own the ministry of such as were
intruded into the Lord’s vineyard, upon the pain of excom-
munication from sealing ordinances.

4. The
4. The decisions of the Assembly 1733, concerning Mr Erskine and his three brethren: That thereby new terms of ministerial communion were fixed, among all the Ministers of the Church;—that Ministers should not testify from the pulpit against the act of Assembly 1732, or any other sinful and unwarrantable proceedings of the judicatories of this Church, or the violent settlements of Ministers which were become so frequent; and that none of their members should ever protest against any of their proceedings.

5. The procedure of the General Assembly, in the years 1728 and 1729, concerning Mr John Simson Professor of Divinity at Glasgow;—in passing no higher censure against him, for his Arian heresy, than that of a bare suspension,—leaving the door open for another Assembly to relax him from the same; and in taking no notice of other gross and pernicious errors, which had been found proven against him: And that they continued to refuse the passing of an assertory act, affirming and owning the truths injured and opposed by him; or a solemn warning against his dangerous errors:——Which matters were more particularly explained afterwards, in the Judicial Testimony.

6. The case of Mr Archibald Campbell, Professor of Church-History at St Andrews: That though he had vented a scheme of erroneous principles, in some books published by him, of a most pernicious tendency; yet, instead of commencing any process against him, he was caressed and countenanced in the Assemblies,—as being a fit man for the purpose of the ruling side, who were carrying on the course of defection:—Which matter was also more particularly explained afterwards, in the Judicial Testimony.

7. The act of the Assembly 1730; by which they discharged the recording of reasons of dissent against the determinations of church-judicatories: Done with a design to bury all faithful testimonies against the backslidings of this Church—in oblivion.

They were also bearing witness against the prevalence of a corrupt and unsound Ministry: Against the dangerous innovation, both in the method and strain of preaching;

while
while as little of Christ was to be found in most of the dis-
courses of many Ministers and preachers, as in the moral
writings of heathen philosophers; supernatural mysteries being
in a great measure exploded and discarded by the *modish haranguers,*—so that many were left to perish for lack of the
knowledge of the Gospel, and of the way of salvation by Christ
in a new covenant: Against the *want* of due *caution* and
tenderness, in the *licensing of young men* as probationers for the
holy Ministry: And against the *neglect* of solemn *national fast ing* and *humiliation* for many years by-past, amidst an
universal degeneracy both in principle and practice through the
land; while it could not be obtained, though the necessity of it
had been represented from year to year, by presbyteries, to our
national Assemblies.—Moreover, in the *historical observes* of
the first Testimony, there was a general witness-bearing against
many other public evils; from the last period of Reformation,
down to the accession of the *Hanover* family: Which came to
be more particularly stated afterwards, in the *Judicial Testimony.*

It remains to be considered here,—*how far* and in *what respect* the several evils against which they did now, or
afterwards, bear a particular testimony,—were held by them for
*reasons* or *grounds* of their *secession.*—And it is evident, that
they did not take either *all* or *any* of those evils, absolutely or in
themselves considered, for grounds of their secession: Because
they still satisfied themselves with testifying in a way of
communion; till matters were come to this pass, by the
procedure of the Commission in *November* 1733,—that they
were “excluded from keeping up a proper testimony against the
‘defections and backslidings of the prevailing party, in a way of
‘ministerial communion with them.’” Their secession, therefore,
did not proceed upon these evils absolutely considered; but
considered as evils against which they were no longer allowed
to maintain a proper testimony in a way of communion: Matters
being then at such a pass, that the testimony was either to be
altogether dropt, or kept up in a way of secession.—And their
protestation before the Commission in *November* 1733, did
make their secession to turn, in the first place, upon this general
ground; That

the
the prevailing party were carrying on a course of defection from our reformed and covenanted principles: So that all public evils, of older or later date, really belonging to that course of defection, as still carried on,—must really belong to the grounds of their secession; considered as evils against which no proper testimony could then take place in a way of communion. Accordingly, though their secession was more immediately laid upon some acts and proceedings of the Assembly and Commission 1733 as restraining ministerial freedom; yet they did not confine the reasons of it, as laid out in the first Testimony, to these particular acts and proceedings;—nor to those evils about which they had been explicitly contending with the judicatories, in the course of the process against them: For some public evils there insisted on as reasons of their secession, particularly the last two of the seven articles above-mentioned,—were what they had not mentioned in the course of that process; or sooner than in the said Testimony after the secession was made.—Wherefore, all public evils, of former as well as present times,—against which they were then bearing witness, or came afterwards to bear witness in an enlargement of their Testimony,—Were all in the same sense grounds of their secession: That is, considered as evils against which they found themselves obliged to bear testimony; and against which they could find no longer access to bear testimony, in a way of communion with the established Church*.

XI. Matters

*There may certainly be such public evils in a Church, as are in themselves sufficient reasons of secession,—making it warrantable and necessary, upon the ground of these evils absolutely considered; whatever liberty particular Ministers might be left at, as to testifying against the same in a way of communion with her,—while she refuses to be reformed. How far this was then, or is now the case with the established Church of Scotland, belongs not to the present question: For the secession of the four brethren was not of that general nature.—It was of a special nature; while it proceeded upon the public evils taking place, only as they had then come to be cloathed with this aggravating qualification,—that a Testimony could no longer be got maintained against them in a way of communion. And in this view, there is no room left for distinguishing betwixt the grounds of the Secession,—and all the public evils (complexly taken) then, or afterwards testified against; these being all the same, according to the special nature of this Secession.—

But
XI. Matters being in the situation which has been represented, when the General Assembly met in May 1734; they rescinded the act 1730, about reasons of dissent,—and also the act 1732, concerning the method of planting vacant churches: Both for the same reason; “Because they were not made according to former acts” (about innovations), “and were found to be hurtful to this Church.” They likewise passed an act, in behalf of what they reckoned due and regular ministerial freedom.—At the same time, they passed an act concerning the four brethren; whereby (“without further enquiring into the occasion or steps of proceeding, either on the part of the said brethren, or by the several judicatories under whose consideration their case hath been”) they empowered the Synod of Perth and Stirling, to restore these brethren to their respective ministerial charges, uniting them to the communion of the established Church: “But with this express direction, That the said Synod shall not take upon them to judge of the legality or formality of the former proceedings of the church-judicatories in relation to this affair; or either to approve or censure the same.”—And accordingly, in July following, the said Synod, as in the place of the General Assembly, “did take off the sentences pronounced by the Commission of the General Assembly 1733 against the foresaid four brethren, declaring the same of no force or effect for the future;” and so did “unite and restore them to ministerial communion with this Church, to their several charges, and to the exercise of all parts of the ministerial function therein.”

XII. A publication was made, in May 1735,—of [Reasons by (the four seceding Ministers), why they have not acceded to the judicatories of the established Church]. This was in consequence of their “having frequently met, to consider what was their duty in the present juncture:” And the general design of that performance was expressed by them in the following manner,

\[ \text{viz.} \]

But while public evils were laid out, in the first Testimony, as grounds of Secession, they were afterwards laid out, in the Judicial Testimony, as grounds of the Lord’s controversy,—to be mourned over in bearing witness against the same.
"When matters were come to such a pass, that we were excluded from keeping up a proper testimony against the defections and backslidings of the prevailing party, in a way of ministerial communion with them; we judged it our necessary duty, for this and other reasons (published in our Testimony), to make a Secession from the judicatories of the established Church: And since the Lord, in his adorable providence, permitted the judicatories to thrust us out, at a time when a course of defection was carried on with a high hand; it will therefore be necessary, for the vindication of our present conduct,—to enquire if the Assembly 1734 have at least so far removed the grounds of our secession, that we may, in a consistency with the Testimony we have emitted, accede unto the judicatories of the Church, and join in ministerial communion with them."

The result of this enquiry was,—That though they owned some part of the grounds of their secession to be removed, by the repeal of the foresaid acts 1730 and 1732 yet they found the principal grounds of it remaining,—unremoved, yea rather aggravated by the Assembly 1734: So that they could not accede to the judicatories in a consistency with, or without falling from the testimony they had given.

More particularly, they found that the act 1732 was reversed,—in a way of abstracting from any acknowledgement of its inconsistency with and contrariety to the word of God: That though the Assembly 1734 did not countenance any violent intrusions themselves, but shewed a disposition to redress grievances of this nature that came regularly before them; yet there was not a sufficient testimony given against the manifest intrusions that had been made in many congregations of this Church;—as there was no confession made of the great sin of the judicatories, in licensing so many to preach the Gospel who seemed to be ashamed of Christ and him crucified; and then imposing and violently obtruding them on God’s heritage through the land: That the act 1734, for restoring them,—did not proceed upon the consideration of the sinfulness and injustice of the sentences passed against them by the Assembly and Commission 1733; but only upon the considera-
tion of the (supposed) lamentable consequences that followed or might follow, upon (what was called) the separation of the four brethren;—so that these sentences were left to be constructed of as (in themselves) legal, formal, and valid still,—for being imitated as lawful precedents, where such consequences might not be apprehended; and thus they were still considered as criminals, favoured with a relaxation of these just sentences for peace-sake: That the said act 1734 plainly insinuated,—as if the matters in controversy between the judicatories and them, were only smaller and trifling matters; and, as if they were the disturbers of the peace of the Church, the authors of divisions and animosities: And that the act 1734, concerning ministerial freedom, seemed to be a plain vindication of all the restraint which had been laid upon it by the act 1733 concerning them; because this act 1734 declares,—That due and regular ministerial freedom was not any-wise impaired or restrained by the said act of Assembly 1733.

These reasons of Non-accession were accompanied with a proposal of some things,—as what would have removed difficulties out of the way of their acceding to the judicatories; and these things were, in substance, as follows, viz. That there should be a seasonable warning, against the infidelity and gross errors prevailing; a proper assertion of the truth, in opposition to Mr Simson’s Arian heresy; an express condemnation of his other gross and dangerous errors;—an inflicting of the highest censure of the Church upon William Nimmo, for the bold and daring attack upon the whole of divine Revelation found proven against him; and an inflicting of the same censure upon Mr Campbell (whose writings were then under the consideration of a committee of the Commission), and Mr Wallace one of the Ministers of Edinburgh, for gross and pernicious errors vented by them,—upon these errors being found proven against them: That the act of Assembly 1733, concerning Mr Erskine and his three brethren, should be rescinded,—and all that had followed thereupon declared null and void in itself; and Ministers enjoined to give faithful warning against the prevailing corruptions of the times: That the act of Assembly 1733, concerning some

Vol. I.  G  brethren
brethren in the presbytery of *Dunfermline*, should be also rescinded; and Ministers declared at freedom to dispense sealing ordinances to such as could not submit to the ministry of intruders: That the acceptance of presentations should be declared contrary to the principles of this Church; probationers accepting of them, to be deprived of their licence; Ministers, for such a transgression, to be suspended,—and, if tenaciously adhering, deposed;—and an act passed against any settlement in time coming, without the call and consent of the majority of the congregation, who are admitted to full communion with the Church in all her sealing ordinances: That all presbyteries should be strictly enjoined, to use due caution and tenderness in the licencing of young men; and an act be passed against the dangerous innovation, both in the method and strain of preaching: And that, in the grounds of a national fast, there should be an acknowledgment of the great guilt of this land, in having gone on into such a course of backsliding, contrary to the word of God,—and to the obligations these lands are under to promote reformation, by, our covenants national and solemn league; with a full and particular enumeration of the steps of defection made in our day.

However, they did not propose these things as containing all that they wanted, in the matter of reformation: But, said they,— “if the above things were done, we might have the comfortable prospect of a pleasant and desirable unity and harmony with our brethren; in concurring with them, according to our weak measure, in all other necessary steps toward a further reformation.”

**PERIOD II.**

The STATE of the Secession-Testimony.

According to the view which is already given, the *Secession Testimony* had a gradual and advancing *rise*, among the hands of the four brethren; in the personal way of their contending with the judicatories, and of their accounting for their own conduct. But there came to be an enlargement of that Testimony, in a public or *judicial* STATE
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ACCORDING to the view which is already given, the Secession Testimony had a gradual and advancing RISE, among the hands of the four brethren; in the personal way of their contending with the judicatories, and of their accounting for their own conduct. But there came to be an enlargement of that Testimony, in a public or judicial STATE
STATE of it;—as a banner displayed for the Truth; or as a standard set up, for gathering and uniting the friends of our covenanted Reformation.

This State of the Testimony consists, in general, of five STEPS,—which were gradually made or taken by the Associate Presbytery, (viz. The Judicial Testimony, the Declinature, the act concerning the doctrine of grace, the act for renewing our covenants; and the answers to Mr Nairn, with the declaration and defence subjoined): And these are now to be severally represented.

**STEP I.**

The Judicial Testimony.

THE four associate Ministers held eleven presbyterial meetings, “mainly for asking counsel of the Lord; and for mutual advice in their present situation, and for strengthening one another’s hands in the way and work of the Lord.” At their twelfth presbyterial meeting, on the 21st day of August 1735, (having spent the preceding day in fasting and prayer),—they resolved to proceed to acts of jurisdiction: And, at the same time; they appointed a committee of their number to prepare a draught of the Judicial Testimony; tracing the defections of this Church as far back as the year 1650. This draught, after spending many sederunts upon it, with diets of fasting and prayer,—was approved of and enacted at their twenty fourth presbyterial meeting in December 1736*.

Their reasons for enacting and emitting this Testimony were to the following effect, viz. That neither had the iniquities and backslidings of former times been ever particularly acknowledged or condemned, nor had the Reformation and Testimony formerly attained to been ever judicially approven and justified, by the judicatories of this Church since the Revolution: That no banner was judicially displayed for Truth, and against the prevailing evils of the present time: That a judicial Testimony ap-

*Upon the 18th of February 1737, Messrs Thomas Mair and Ralph Erskine laid copies before the Associate Presbytery,—of papers of secession, which they had given in to their presbytery of Dunfermline on the 16th of that month; with declarations of adherence to the Judicial Testimony, as what they had perused,—and of accession to this presbytery. They were accordingly received to a seat in it: And as that Testimony was then a-printing, these papers were published along with it.
peared necessary for the glory of God, for the information and conviction of the present generation; and for the information of posterity, in having the truth transmitted to them with a suitable Testimony thereunto: That the Lord was calling them, by their peculiar situation in adorable providence, to lift up the standard of a Judicial Testimony for the truths of God; and against a course of backsliding from the same: That the world might see, by such an open confession of their principles, what they owned and acknowledged; and upon what foundation they desired, through the grace of the Lord Jesus, to stand:—And that they might thus fulfil their ministry, according to their ordination-vows: And according to the obligation which they, as well as the whole land, were under, by solemn oath, to the most high God; “That we shall sincerely, really and constantly, through the grace of God endeavour, in our several places and callings, the preservation of the reformed religion in the Church of Scotland; in doctrine, worship, discipline and government;”—and that we shall not “give ourselves to a detestable indifferency or neutrality in this cause,—but shall, all the days of our lives, zealously and constantly continue therein.”

Accordingly, this Testimony was published (with an Introduction) in March 1737: The tenor whereof follows.

ACT,

(N. B. It is only in the present Display, that this Testimony is divided into several parts, (viz. Preamble, Chapters, Sections, Articles, and Conclusion).—with distinguishing titles; being all one continued piece under the general title,—as emitted by the Associate Presbytery. And here also, the places of Scripture referred to are mostly marked at the foot of the page; and sometimes the places of our Confession and Catechisms: These being all in the body of it; as formerly published in a separate pamphlet, through various editions. Moreover, a few explanatory notes are added.

Above two hundred errors of words and figures, beside many of letters,—and above an hundred omissions of words, yea sometimes of whole lines; have crept into the last edition 1770: But these are carefully corrected here; from the first edition in the year 1737, and a manuscript copy, which belonged to the Associate Presbytery.—At the same time, by correcting improprieties of pointing and printing,—both the sentences and paragraphs are all along much shorter here, than in any former edition; which will be found of great advantage, for an easy reading and understanding of it.)
ACT, DECLARATION 
AND 
TESTIMONY:

FOR THE

DOCTRINE, WORSHIP, DISCIPLINE, and GOVERNMENT of the Church of Scotland; agreeable to the word of God, the Confession of Faith, the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant of the three Nations:

AND AGAINST

Several STEPS OF DEFECTION from the same, both in former and present Times.

By some Ministers, associate together for the exercise of Church-government and discipline in a Presbyterial capacity.

PREAMBLE.

At Perth, the third day of December, one thousand seven hundred and thirty-six years. Which day and place the Presbytery being met; and taking into their serious consideration the low state of religion at this day,—the manifold defections and backslidings of all ranks, both in former and present times, from the truths of God and the precious ordinances and institutions of Jesus Christ, delivered as a valuable trust unto his Church and people in this nation; and to the maintenance and preservation of which, the whole land stands indispensably bound and obliged, by the most solemn covenant-engagements: And especially, considering the present growth and spreading of
of dangerous and pernicious errors, and the many injuries that are done to the government and discipline of the House of God amongst us; together with the abounding sin, wickedness and profaneness of the present generation,—and the deep security and general stupidity that prevails, under our national sins and spiritual judgments; by all which God is highly dishonoured and provoked, his sanctuary profaned, the kingdom of his Son undermined, and the whole land involved in the dreadful guilt of apostasy from the Lord:—Therefore this Presbytery find themselves bound in duty, to cast in their mite of a Testimony to the many great and wonderful appearances of the Lord for this Church and land; and to the doctrine, worship, government, and discipline of the Lord’s House therein,—agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, the national Covenant of Scotland, and the solemn League and Covenant of the three nations: As also against the injuries and insolent indignities done unto, and the, encroachments, violations and breaches made upon the same.

To this they reckon they are warranted, from the practice and example of the Church and people of God recorded in Scripture; who very often commemorate the remarkable appearances made for them, the signal deliverances they met with,—together with their own deep ingratitude and heinous provocations, both of an older and later date: And also from the practice and example of this Church in former times. And likewise they judge a Testimony of this kind necessary, for the information of the present generation,—who have generally lost the knowledge, both of what God hath done for Scotland, and of the grounds and causes of his righteous quarrel and controversy against us; necessary, for the conviction and humiliation of all ranks of persons; necessary to preserve and maintain the truths of God; and an useful mean, to transmit them to following generations in their purity.

C H A P. I. The approving Part of the Testimony.

Therefore, for all the above and many other weighty reasons and considerations,—the Ministers associated, being met in Presbytery, did and hereby do, in
the first place, with thankful hearts, acknowledge and bear record unto the wonderful power, grace and goodness of God, in visiting this land very early with the light of the glorious gospel; whereby from these uttermost ends of the earth were songs heard, even glory to Jesus Christ the righteous. And thus the promises and prophecies given of old were remarkably accomplished: Namely, that the heathen should be given unto Christ for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession; that the isles should wait for his law; and that he should be the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar of upon the sea.

Yea, when this and other nations were involved in popish darkness, God left not himself without a witness in this land. Our ancient records bear, that, in the darkest times of popery,—the Lord had some witnesses for himself amongst us, against the errors and idolatry of Rome.

And when the Lord, by a bright and clear sunshine of the gospel in several parts of Europe, discovered that Mystery of Iniquity,—Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots, and abominations of the earth: He was also graciously pleased, with an high hand and an outstretched arm, to ransom this land from the bondage of popish tyranny, idolatry and superstition; and again to bless it with the light and liberty of the gospel. So strong was the hand of the Lord upon a few polished shafts, chosen and furnished by himself; that in a short time, in the midst of the flames of fiery persecution, and against the rage and fury of devils and men,—this great work was so far advanced and effectuate, that, in the year 1560, the Pope’s authority was abolished in Scotland: And the first Confession of Faith (directed mainly against the errors and abominations of the Church of Rome, the great point upon which the testimony of the Lord’s witnesses was then stated), was ratified and approved by the Parliament. And in a few years thereafter, most congregations were planted with the ministry of the gospel,—and did yield subjection unto the ordinances of Christ: The government and discipline of the Church was established, according to the pattern shown in the Mount; in a due subordination of congregational elderships, presbyteries and synods, unto General Assemblies: The First Book of Discipline, which contains many excellent
excellent reformation principles, written with a simplicity and plainness peculiar to reforming times,—together with some other things that were, in the judgment of the compliers of that book, adapted to the then state and circumstances of the Church; was approven by the Privy Council of Scotland, in the foresaid year 1560. The General Assembly, anno 1562, refused to admit one Mr Alexander Gordon to be superintendant of Galloway—till he should subscribe the same*. And the General Assembly anno 1638, in their act condemning the five articles of Perth, refer several times unto it; from whence it is plain, that it was received and approven by this Church at our Reformation.

Afterwards, the Second Book of Discipline, wherein the form of government and discipline in the House of God is more distinctly laid down, was approven and registrate by the General Assembly anno 1581; and appointed to be subscribed by all the Ministers of this Church, anno 1590: And all the pieces of the reformation then attained unto, were ratified and approven by the Parliament anno 1592.—In grateful acknowledgment of which rare and singular mercies, and for their own mutual strength and support against the common enemy,—the national covenant, having been first subscribed by the King and his household in the year 1580, was subscribed by persons of all ranks anno 1581; and again by all ranks of persons in the year 1590. This covenant, relating to the reformed religion then professed in Scotland, and more particularly expressed in the Large Confession of Faith,—was sworn with much cheerfulness and gladness of heart; the whole land rejoiced at the oath of God. And, by this solemn Oath and Covenant, this kingdom made a national surrender of themselves to the Lord; and bound and obliged, both themselves and their posterity, to cleave to the truths of God,—and to the observation of his laws, ordinances and institutions.

But the above-mentioned reformation, and the glory of this Church, was much defaced; when King James VI, desirous to gratify the prelatical party in England, did, contrary to his most solemn professions, declarations and engagements,
engagements, by the advice and assistance of some covetous time-serving churchmen,—first introduce a lordly prelacy into this Church: And afterwards corrupted the worship, by imposing popish ceremonies of the Church of England; under the authority of a pretended General Assembly that met at Perth, anno 1618. And his son, King Charles I, endeavoured to carry on the same design; by imposing a service-book, and a book of popish and prelatic canons. Which course of defection continued for many years, without interruption.—Yet, during this period of grievous sinning and backsliding, there were several eminent men who witnessed against the same: Also the word of the gospel was countenanced in several corners of the land, with more than ordinary power and success; particularly in several places of the west of Scotland, anno 1625,—and at the Kirk of Shots, in the year 1630.

And, after all, the Lord was graciously pleased to turn back the captivity of this Church when it was least expected; even when prelacy appeared to be fenced with all the strength of civil authority, and a great body of the Ministry couching in conformity under the burden of it. Yet he did, in a most surprising and wonderful manner, cut asunder the cords of these plowers who plowed upon the back of this Church: And revived his own work through the land; by animating at first a few of his servants and people, in the year 1637, to testify more openly and boldly against the current of the defection and apostasy of that time. And he was pleased to give such remarkable countenance to their proceedings, that in the month of February 1638, notwithstanding of many threats and strong opposition of adversaries,—they renewed the national Covenant: And the power of God was present with them in such an eminent manner, that, within a few months thereafter, almost the whole land did cheerfully and joyfully come under the oath of God. Here there was no force nor compulsion from the civil powers; all this was done voluntarily and cheerfully, in the face of great opposition from a threatening and enraged Court.

Likewise, in the latter end of the foresaid year, a free and lawful General Assembly met at Glasgow; who deposed all, and excommunicated some of the Prelates: Re-

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cognized and approved the national Covenant; and prelacy, with the five articles of *Perth*, were found and declared to be abjured by it: And several other laudable acts and constitutions were made for purging the House of God, and the advancement of reformation: as the acts of that Assembly more fully bear. And, though the determinations of this Assembly were much opposed by a popish and prelatic party; yet, through the good hand of the Lord upon his servants and people, the Reformation then begun and carried on—was ratified and confirmed by the second Parliament of King *Charles I* anno 1640: The last session of which Parliament was countenanced by the King’s presence, anno 1641. And from this time till the year 1650, the building of the House of God went on prosperously and successfully: During which period, the following things deserve particularly to be remembered.

I. The Lord gave testimony and witness to his own work, by a remarkable down-pouring of his spirit from on high on the judicatories,—and assemblies of his people for worship: The word of the gospel was powerful and successful; the pleasure of the Lord did prosper through the land: And a seed was sown, which the fury and rage of twenty-eight years hot persecution afterwards could not extirpate.

II. The remarkable countenance which the Lord gave to the reforming and covenanting Church of *Scotland*, did excite their neighbours in *England* and *Ireland* to join with them in a solemn covenant; for maintaining, advancing, and carrying on a work of reformation in the three kingdoms.—This covenant, however reproached and reviled, was, for the matter of it, just and warrantable; for the ends, necessary and commendable; and for the time, seasonable. The season when this covenant was entered into, was the dangerous state of the Church and kingdom of

* These were articles violently obtruded in the corrupt Assembly at *Perth*, 1618; which enacted, 1. Kneeling at the sacrament of our Lord’s supper. 2. A private administration of that sacrament, to persons long sick or dying. 3. Private baptism, an alledged great necessity. 4. Confirmation of children by Bishops. 5. An observation of some holy-days; in commemoration of our Lord’s birth, passion, resurrection, ascension, and sending down of the Holy Ghost.
Period II.  

**Act, Declaration and Testimony.**

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of Scotland; the distressed state of the Church and kingdom of England; and the deplorable state of the Church and kingdom of Ireland. The matter of this covenant was all the precious things that are involved in pure religion and true liberty; namely, the preservation of the reformed religion in Scotland, in doctrine worship, government and discipline: And the reformation of religion according to the word of God, in England and Ireland. In this covenant, every one bound themselves to personal reformation; and, in their several places, stations, and callings,—to endeavour national reformation: Duties obligatory upon every one, antecedently to this oath and covenant. The end of this solemn covenant was,—that they and their posterity after them might, as brethren, live in faith and love; that the Lord might be one and his name one, through the three kingdoms. And, as an eminent divine* expressed himself before the House of Commons in England, when they were about to swear the said covenant;—“This oath (saith he) is such, in the matter and consequences of it, as I can truly say it is worthy of us; yea of all these kingdoms, yea of all the kingdoms in the world: For it is a swearing fealty and allegiance unto Christ the King of Kings; and a giving up of all these kingdoms, which are his inheritance, to be subdued more unto his throne,—and ruled more by his sceptre, upon whose shoulder the government is laid.”—This Oath and Covenant was appointed to be sworn by persons of all ranks in England and Ireland; and was entered into by the whole body of this land: And, when it was approven by the General Assembly of this Church anno 1643, they express themselves in this manner,—“That they all with one voice approve of the same; with these feelings of joy which they did find in so great a measure, at the renewing of the national Covenant of this Kirk and kingdom.”

III. In prosecution of the above covenanted uniformity, a Confession of Faith was agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, with Commissioners from the Church of Scotland; likewise the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Propositions concerning Church-government and the ordination of Ministers, and the Directory for worship,—

*Mr Philip Nye.*
worship,—all agreed upon by the foresaid Assembly at Westminster;—were received and approven by this Church, in the manner expressed in the several acts of Assembly relative unto them: To all which the General Assembly of this Church reckoned this land bound and obliged, by the solemn League and Covenant as their said acts more fully bear.

IV. When the much desired and covenanted uniformity had proceeded thus far, many in this land involved themselves in the breach of covenant by the war with England, commonly called the Duke’s engagement; which was testified against and condemned, by the General Assemblies of this Church: And the sinfulness thereof was afterwards acknowledged by all ranks of persons, when the solemn League and Covenant was renewed in Scotland, anno 1648; with a solemn Acknowledgment of sins and breaches thereof, and Engagement to the duties therein contained. In the said engagement to the duties of the Covenant, they bind and oblige themselves to preserve the purity of religion against all error, heresy, and schism; and to study and endeavour the carrying on the work of uniformity: Whereby the above-mentioned uniformity in one Confession of Faith, one form of Church-government and Directory for Worship,—is solemnly approven, and sworn unto. And, by the foresaid renovation of the solemn League and Covenant, this land declared they looked upon this oath as nationally binding upon them; whatever the behaviour of their neighbours in England or Ireland might be. And as the General Assembly, in their brotherly exhortation to their brethren in England, August 6th 1649, express themselves: “Although (say they) there were none in the one kingdom who did adhere to the Covenant, yet thereby were not the other kingdom, nor any person in either of them, absolved from the bond thereof; since in it we have not only sworn by the Lord, but also covenanted with him. It is not the failing of one or more, that can absolve others from their duty or tie to him. Besides, the duties therein contained being in themselves lawful, and the grounds of our tie thereunto moral; though others do forget their duty, yet doth not their defection free us from that obliga-

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“tion which lies upon us by the Covenant in our places and stations. And the Covenant being intended and entered into by these kingdoms, as one of the best means of stedfastness for guarding against declining times; it were strange to say, that the backsliding of any should absolve others from the tie thereof: Especially seeing our engagement therein is not only national, but personal; every one with uplifted hands swearing for himself, as is evident by the tenor of the Covenant.”

V. During this period, the estates of the nation also, gave their helping hand to the work of reformation; not only by the legal establishment given unto it in the foresaid year 1640, but also by approving the solemn League and Covenant anno 1644,—and by many laudable acts of Parliament passed anno 1649: Particularly by the act abolishing patronages, a grievance and yoke under which this Church had groaned ever since the reformation from popery: And by their act for keeping the judicatories and places of trust free of corruption; and by the act of classes; and by the act for purging the army of persons disaffected to the cause and work of reformation*. Also, by another act passed in the foresaid year 1649, they ordained and declared,—“That before the King’s Majesty who now is, or any of his successors, shall be admitted to the exercise of his royal power; he shall assure and declare, by his solemn oath under his hand and seal, his allowance of the national Covenant, and of the solemn League and Covenant,—and his obligation to prosecute the ends thereof, in his station and calling: And that he

“shall,

*These four acts, passed in the year 1649, are not here mentioned according to the order of time,—but rather according to the order of matter. The act first mentioned, was passed March 9; the second February 17; the third, January 23; and the fourth, June 21.—The act of classes: was for purging the judicatories, and other places of public trust. By this act, such as had been engaged in malignant or other scandalous courses—were distinguished into four classes; according to the several degrees of their offences. These of the first class were to be excluded from the judicatories, and other places of trust,—in all time coming. These of the other classes were to be excluded for certain lengths of time, (the second for ten years, the third for five years, and the fourth for one year); and afterwards, till they should satisfy the judicatories of Church and State as to their reformation.
“shall, for himself and his successors, consent and agree to acts of Parliament enjoining the solemn League and Covenant,—and fully establishing Presbyterian government, the Directory of Worship, Confession of Faith and Catechisms, as they are approven by the General Assembly of this Kirk and Parliament of this kingdom,—in all his Majesty’s dominions; and that he shall observe these in his practice and family; and that he shall never make opposition to any of these, or endeavour any change thereof.” In pursuance of this act of Parliament, King Charles II, having by his solemn oath declared his approbation of the national Covenant and of the solemn League and Covenant, and obliged himself to prosecute the ends thereof,—was crowned with great solemnity at Scone, upon the 1st of January 1650.

The above particulars are some instances of the power and goodness of the most high God, manifested in the beginning and progress of the work of reformation in this land; which this Presbytery judge it their duty to record and bear witness unto. For as the arm of the Lord was gloriously revealed, in recovering this Church and nation from antichristian darkness; and bringing all ranks of persons within the bond of a national Oath and Covenant to be the Lord’s: So, when, by a surprising and wonderful appearance of divine providence, this Church was delivered from the brink of ruin in the year 1638,—the judicatories of the Church pulled down and carried off the rubbish of defection; they began where former reformation had stopped, and went forward in building and beautifying the House of God.

But since the Church, while militant, is in an imperfect state; it is not hereby intended to affirm,—that, under the above-mentioned period, there was nothing defective or wanting as to the beauty and order of the .House of God; or that there was nothing culpable in the administration. All that is designed by the above particular deduction is,—to declare that this Church endeavoured, and mercifully attained a considerable pitch of reformation, during the foresaid period: Towards this their several contendings and wrestlings, their solemn vows and engagements, their declarations and testimonies,—all pointed.
C H A P. II.  *The condemning Part of the Testimony.*

**Section I. Public Evils from the year 1650, till the Revolution in 1688.**

IT would have been the happiness and glory of this Church, if she had held fast what, by the good hand of God upon her, and by a series and train of remarkable providences both of mercy and judgment, she had attained unto. But how soon did her *gold become dim*? how quickly was her *most fine gold changed*? Ah! how was her glory eclipsed, and her beauty suddenly departed from her? A glorious building was pulled down: A reformation ratified, confirmed and established in the strongest terms by law, and fenced by the most solemn oaths and covenants, sworn with uplifted hands by our King, by our Noblemen, Barons, Ministers, Burgesses and commons of all sorts,—was not only sullied, but overturned; and by these very hands that had been lifted up to Heaven for the preservation and maintenance of the same. Hath a nation changed their gods, which yet are no gods? but *Scotland* hath changed her glory for that which doth not profit! May it not be said,—*Be astonished, 0 ye Heavens, at this; be horribly afraid: For my people have committed two evils, they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters; and have hewn out to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water?* Can there be a parallel given in any church or land, of that scene that opened of backsliding and defection,—of perjury and apostasy; or of that oppression and cruelty afterwards exercised upon such as adhered unto the cause and covenant of their God: After so many and so great appearances of the Lord in a way of mercy amongst us; and after such solemn professions of subjection and obedience unto him?

The *Presbytery* pretended not to reckon up the innumerable abominations of the land: But they judge it their duty to give some particular instances of the beginning, progress, and height of that apostasy and defection from the above-mentioned steps of reformation; in which all ranks of persons have sinfully and shamefully involved themselves.

I. When
I. When the judicatories of the Church were carrying on the work of reformation with a beautiful and pleasant harmony, a snare was laid for breaking and dividing them. In the month of December 1650, and in the beginning of 1651,—two several questions being put unto the Commission of the General Assembly by the King and Parliament, concerning the admission into places of public trust, both civil and military, of such as were debarred from the same by the above-mentioned acts of Parliament anno 1649*: The Resolutions of the Commission upon the said questions were such, as the King and Parliament took occasion from them to repeal the forefaid laudable acts; and all places of public trust, civil and military, were immediately filled with such whose disaffection to the work of reformation, carried on from the year 1638, was abundantly notour†. Malignants in principle, and such as were immoral in practice, were promoted. A sham profession of repentance was required at first, from such as had been active against the work of reformation; but even this was soon laid aside‡. And when the resolutions of the Commission were remonstrate against by some presbyteries, and several Ministers; the Commission discharged all Ministers or probationers to speak or write against them. And what was done by the Commission, was approven by some ensuing Assemblies: Who also excluded all, both Ministers and Elders, who remonstrated against the public Resolutions, from sitting in General Assemblies; and appointed presbyteries to oblige both intrants into the Mini-

*The first of these two questions did generally respect the admission of malignants into the army as private soldiers; and particularly, their admission into places of military trust or command: But that general part of it is here abstracted from. The second question respected their admission into the judicatories, and other places of civil trust.

†Wodrow’s Hist. vol. I. Introd. p. 3, 4, 5.

‡The Commission’s giving way to what was desired of them, by their resolutions about the two ensnaring questions,—was upon terms of a fair appearance. But it was too evident, though not duly considered by them,—that the tide was then running against any proper regard to these terms; that the corrupt measures, which were quickly taken in consequence of the resolutions,—were designed in putting the questions: And that the malignant party was in readiness to make a sham profession of repentance, so far as should be found necessary for gaining their own political ends.
stry before they were admitted to trials for ordination, and elders before they were allowed to sit in presbytery, to give it under their hand,—that they passed from any protestation or declinature against the said Assemblies; and likewise some eminent Ministers were suspended and deposed, for testifying against the foresaid resolutions. But the constitution and actings of these Assemblies having been protested against by a considerable body of Ministers and Elders, who were grieved at the foresaid resolutions of the Commission; all such were designed Protesters, as these on the other side were called Public Resolutioners.

By the above proceedings, the nation (with the consent of the Church) delivered up, not only the maintenance and preservation of their valuable civil liberties, but also of all the civil securities and ratifications given unto the work of reformation from the year 1638,—into the hands of such who had appeared for the support and maintainance of arbitrary power and authority in the state, and who were notour enemies of a covenanted reformation. As the foresaid resolutions, both of Church and State, were contrary to and condemned by the word of God*: So their sin and guilt in this matter was the more heinous, and the more highly aggravated; in regard it was what had been so lately acknowledged, and so solemnly engaged against,—in the solemn acknowledgment of sins and engagement to duties.

The sinfulness of these proceedings was witnessed against, by a considerable number of eminent Ministers and godly Elders through the land,—who laid open the dangerous tendency of them: And what they had too just ground to fear, came in a short time to pass; these men, who were now admitted into places of public trust,—had an active hand in overthrowing the beautiful constitution of this Church, and in bringing the nation under the yoke of arbitrary government. And it cannot well escape to be taken notice of,—that the most part of these who were for the Public Resolutions, made defection unto prelacy;

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whereas all the Protesters, except a few, stood firm against it: When, in the year 1662, this cursed Jericho was rebuilt. And some of the former, who were honest in the main, but carried into the measures of the Court,—came with regret to see their error and mistake; and to acknowledge*—That their brethren the PROTESTERS had their eyes opened, when they were blind.

When this Church and land was thus miserably rent, and broken, (as a just punishment for this step of declining and treachery in the cause and covenant of the Lord), the nation was brought under the yoke of Oliver Cromwell the Usurper; under which it groaned for the space of ten years. During this period, a most sinful toleration of sectarian errors and delusions was granted by Cromwell and his Privy-council in Scotland. This was the first of this kind known among us since the Reformation: And thereby such laxness in principle and practice was introduced, as paved a way for the more general apostasy and defection which followed very soon thereafter. The foresaid toleration was faithfully witnessed against by some Ministers in the provinces of Perth and Fife, (in their Testimony published anno 1659); as contrary to the word of God, our Confession of Faith, and Larger Catechism; and as contrary to, and inconsistent with the solemn Oath and Covenant of God sworn by the nation: And likewise as producing many dismal and sinful effects,—such as the increase and growth of errors and blasphemy, with laxness and profaneness in practice; and also as a temptation to men to break the Lord’s bonds asunder, and to cast his cords from off them.

II. After the death of Oliver Cromwell the Usurper, and when the power of the sectarian party (who had ruled the three kingdoms for several years) began to decline; the Parliament of England restored King Charles II, to the government, without any conditions or limitations: Whereby all the testimonies and declarations they had given for a covenanted reformation and uniformity, were at once given up. And immediately abjured prelacy, with the service-book and all the ceremonies, were re-imposed

in *England*: A dismal presage of what was now coming on *Scotland*; where, until a meeting of Parliament, the government was lodged in the hands of a *Committee of Estates* named by the last Parliament *anno* 1651. This committee, consisting of such as were disaffected to the work of reformation, caused seize and imprison a few eminent Ministers; who met about an address to the King upon his return,—and, with the faithfulness that became their office, putting him in mind of his own and the nation’s solemn covenant engagements to the Lord: Upon which occasion a proclamation was immediately emitted, discharging all meetings without the King’s authority; and all the above and like petitions and remonstrances whatsoever, under a pretext of their being seditious*. This was a prelude unto the dismal scene that was now opening.

III. When the Parliament met in *Scotland anno* 1661, they immediately remove all the legal securities given to our Church-constitution and the whole work of reformation; by rescinding all acts of Parliament from the year 1640 to 1651 inclusive, and declaring all the said Parliaments null and void: They assert the King’s supremacy in all causes; and declare all meetings, assemblies, leagues and covenants, without the King’s countenance and authority,—unlawful and unwarrantable: They discharge the renewing of the *League and Covenant*, or any other public oath and covenant concerning the government of the Church,—without the King’s warrant†: And having thus removed all the legal fences from our Church-constitution, they give up the government of the Church to be settled by the King,—in the way *He* judged most agreeable to the word of God, and monarchical government.

IV. At the second session of this Parliament *anno* 1662‡, it is declared,—That the ordering and disposal of the external government and policy of the Church doth properly belong to the King, as an inherent right of the Crown; by virtue of his royal prerogative and supremacy, in causes ecclesiastic: All acts of Parliament or Council which might

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†Cha. II. Parl. I. Sess. 1. Acts 7.9.15.16.
‡ Parl. I. Sess. 2, Acts 1.2.
might be interpreted to give any church-power, jurisdiction or
governments to the office-bearers of the Church and their
meetings, than that which acknowledged a dependence upon,
and subordination to the sovereign power of the King as
supreme; are rescinded, cassated, and annulled: Diocesan
Bishops are restored to their dignities, privileges and
jurisdictions; all meetings of presbyteries and sessions, not
authorised by the Bishop, are discharged. In their second act all
that was done in prosecution of a covenanted reformation, from
1638 to 1650, is declared rebellious and treasonable; the
national Covenant, as sworn in the year 1638, and the solemn
League and Covenant, are declared to be unlawful oaths,—and
imposed contrary to the fundamental laws of the kingdom: And
likewise in the said act, a dispensing power is assumed;
declaring, the consciences of all those who had taken the
foresaid oaths—free from the obligation of them. It is also
declared rebellious and treasonable in subjects, upon pretence of
reformation, or any other pretence whatever,—to enter into
leagues and covenants, or to take up arms against the King:
Whereby the sinful and absurd doctrines of passive obedience
and non-resistance, condemned by the memorable Revolution
anno 1688, were screwed up to the highest. As likewise, they
annul all ecclesiastical acts and constitutions approving the
national Covenant, or the solemn League and Covenant: And
particularly they declared,—that the Assembly that met at
Glasgow, anno 1638, was in itself an unlawful and seditious
meeting; and that their acts, deeds and sentences were, in all
time coming,—to be reputed unlawful, void, and null.

Afterwards, by an act of Council at Glasgow, about three
hundred Ministers are, without any legal procedure, thrust from
their charges; merely for non conformity, and refusing
subjection to the Prelates*: And, in the year 1663, the
Parliament ordain and enact,—That all non conforming
Ministers that shall presume to exercise their ministry, shall be
punished as seditious persons. And also, in acknowledgment of
and hearty compliance with his Majesty’s government
ecclesiastic and civil,—all the subjects are required to give their
concurrence and countenance

to these who are, by public authority, admitted to their several parishes, (namely, prelatic incumbents); and to attend their meetings for worship, under the penalties mentioned in the act of Parliament: And also for putting all these tyrannical laws, and others that were enacted in this period, in execution; an high Commission Court was erected,—most irregular and arbitrary, both for its constitution and manner of procedure. During this period of apostasy, viz. from the year 1660 to 1688, there is a continued series and train of acts of Parliament—supporting the Prelates and maintaining prelacy; and obliging the whole land to conformity, and to homologate the King's supremacy.

Thus abjured prelacy is restored: And not only is the royal prerogative screwed up to a most exorbitant height, in matters merely civil; but an authority is put into the hands of the King, like to that which is usurped by the Roman Antichrist. The Lord Jesus, on whose shoulder the government of his own House is laid, and who alone is able and worthy to bear this weight and burden*,—is, as far as human laws could do it, divested of his prerogative-royal; namely, his incommunicable Headship, sovereignty and authority over the Church his spiritual kingdom: And all this done by the representatives of the nation, in opposition and contradiction to the most solemn professions of allegiance unto the King of Zion; and the most solemn oaths and covenants that a people could come under to the most high God.

Yea, to such an height of heaven-daring impiety and wickedness did they arrive, that, in the year 1662, the national Covenant as it was sworn in the year 1638, and the solemn League and Covenant,—together with that remarkable paper, intituled, The causes of the Lord's wrath,—were most ignominiously burnt at the cross of Linlithgow, by the authority of the Magistrates there. And afterwards (January 14th 1682), the solemn League and Covenant is condemned, by the Duke of York then Commissioner and the Privy Council,—to be most contemptuously burnt at the Cross of Edinburgh, by the hands of the common hangman: Which was accordingly done, to the

*Psalm ii. throughout. Isa. ix. 6, 7. Eph. i. 22, 23.
the public affronting and dishonouring of the great God, to whom these solemn vows were made. It was also declared by act of Parliament (May 6th 1685),—that the giving or taking of the national Covenant as explained in the year 1638, or of the League and Covenant, or writing in defence thereof, or owning them as lawful or obligatory upon themselves or others,—shall infer the crime and pains of treason. Can a parallel be given to such perfidy and treachery, to such apostasy and defection? What nation once like Scotland, for a zealous profession of obedience and subjection to the Prince of the Kings of the earth! but now scarce to be equalled for treachery and apostasy; attended at the same time with a flood of profaneness and immorality, overflowing the whole land!

V. In this hour and power of darkness, an universal silent submission is given at first to the above wicked tyrannical acts and constitutions: No open, judicial or joint Testimony, was lifted up against them. When the storm was ready to break, ten Ministers and two Elders met together, (a small number in comparison of what might have been expected in such a day of perplexity and distress),—in order to present a supplication to the King; for his employing his royal power and authority, in the preservation and maintainance of the true Protestant reformed religion in the three kingdoms, according to the national Covenant and the solemn League and Covenant,—both which he had solemnly sworn, at his coronation in Scotland: But they were, without all law and justice, immediately apprehended and incarcerated—for no other reason, but because they were framing such a supplication; and (as has been already observed) all such meetings, petitions and remonstrances of public grievances,—were discharged as seditious.

This struck such a terror on the most part, that no joint remonstrance or testimony was offered. And when some provincial Synods in the year 1661, when the Parliament had begun to raze the work of reformation, were considering what was proper for them to do in this juncture; they were dissolved, in the King’s name, by such noblemen or gentlemen as the Commissioner to the Parliament had appointed to observe their proceedings. All of them imme-

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diately obeyed; some of them dismissed even without prayer. The Synod of Galloway protested against their dissolution, but yet they rose immediately. The Synod of Glasgow, at their ordinary meeting in April, adjourned themselves till May; then to consider of a supplication to the Parliament, for the security of religion: But when they were about to convene, they were discharged in a proclamation from the Cross by order from the King’s Commissioner; to which they gave obedience. And likewise when, in the beginning of the year 1662, all synodical and presbyterial meetings, until authorised by the Bishops, were discharged; presbyteries, as well as synods were immediately deserted*. Such fainting in the cause of God, in this day of apostasy and backsliding,—was a sign and evidence of the Lord’s indignation and wrath: And was far from that courage and resolution that sometimes appeared among the Ministers of this Church; who witnessed against the like encroachments upon the liberties and privileges of the House of God, in face of the greatest opposition.

In like manner, in obedience to the act of Council at Glasgow, the most part of these that conformed not to prelacy left their flocks; whereby they became a prey to the grievous wolves that were afterwards thrust in upon them. Yea, the greatest part by far through the whole land gave obedience to the above-mentioned act of Parliament,—requiring them to attend upon worship performed by the Bishops underlings, or such as conformed to prelacy; in testimony of their acknowledgment of, and hearty compliance with his Majesty’s government ecclesiastic and civil: By which means all ranks of persons, from the highest to the lowest, were involved in the apostasy and defection; and guilty of the grossest treachery in the cause and covenant of the Lord. And, for all the above-mentioned and the like sins, awful judgments are threatened in the word of God.†

VI. When the Ministers who, by the proceedings of the Parliament and Council anno 1662, were cast out of their

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their Churches, had recovered from the consternation and damp which such a sudden convulsion in the Church and State had brought upon them; they begun to be persuaded, that it was their duty, notwithstanding of their tyrannical ejection, to preach the gospel of Christ. And the people being more and more alienated from the Bishops creatures, or Curates, as they were called, (many of them being not only ignorant and profane, but all of them being guilty of perjury and defection; in receiving a commission immediately from, and acting in subordination unto, and by a power derived from the abjured Prelates,—contrary to the word of God, and our reformation-principles confirmed by solemn oaths and covenants);—and being also sensible of the obligation still lying upon them to own their ejected Ministers as faithful servants of Christ, and of their duty to receive the ordinances of Christ as dispensed by them: Therefore not a few of the said Ministers, considering the present urgent necessity of the people, and their cheerful readiness and willingness to hear the word of God,—saw themselves called of the Lord to preach the gospel, wherever providence ordered their abode.

They began at first to preach in private houses. This enraged the Prelates; who ceased not to stir up the rulers to all extravagances of cruelty, for suppressing these peaceable and harmless assemblies for the worship of God. Hence the Parliament declared all such meetings, or conventicles as they were called,—to be seditious and criminal; and discharged them under the severest penalties. After this, houses were forced when people were assembled for hearing the word of God: Many were haled to prison, and the laws execute with rigour against them. These severities constrained them at last to keep their meetings in the fields: Whereupon the rage and fury of the rulers, instigate by the apostate Prelates, did break forth into a more extensive and boundless flame. Several acts of Parliament and Council were emitted, and all ways of cruelty imaginable taken,—to suppress meetings in houses, and in the fields: Field-meetings being discharged under pain of death to the Minister, and grievous penalties upon such as did attend them. Hence ensued a train of the greatest barbarities, wherewith these two persecut-
ing reigns were indelibly stained; as the effect of tyrannical acts, and the more tyrannical execution of them.—But notwithstanding of these severities; the more the Lord’s people were afflicted, the more they grew: When the gospel was dispensed at the peril of their lives from the sword in the wilderness, the Lord gave remarkable countenance to his own ordinances; which were blessed to the conversion and confirmation of many.

VII. When the rulers at this time saw that they could not, by all the above acts of cruelty, extirpate the assemblies of the Lord’s people for worship according to his own institution,—and which were the only monuments of his covenanted interest in the land; but the more they laboured to suppress them, the more frequent they grew: Then the cunning and crafty device of an Indulgence to some of the outed Ministers is fallen upon; whereby many, otherwise eminent lights, were ensnared and taken. This indulgence was first granted by the King in his letter to the Privy-Council, dated June 7th 1769: Whereby he authoriseth them to appoint so many of the outed Ministers, who had lived peaceably and orderly,—to return to preach and exercise the functions of their ministry in the parish churches where they formerly served, providing they be vacant, and that patrons should present to other churches, such others of them as the Council should approve. The Ministers allowed by this letter to exercise their ministry were appointed to keep presbyteries and synods; namely, such as depended upon, and were authorised by the Bishops: And in case they did not, they were to be confined within the bounds of the parishes where they were allowed to preach. Also the letter requires, that they be strictly enjoined not to admit any from neighbouring parishes to the communion; nor to baptize their children, nor to marry any of them,—without the allowance of the Curate of the parish; and that they should not give countenance to any who deserted their own parish-churches, and resorted to their preachings; and that no seditious discourse or expression be uttered in the pulpit, or elsewhere, by any of these Ministers.

In pursuance of the above letter, the Privy-Council, at different times, appoint several Ministers to preach and exercise
74  Act, Declaration and Testimony.  Period II.

exercise the other functions of the ministry; some at the churches out of which they had been ejected,—others (their own churches being planted with intruders) were appointed, with consent of the patron, to churches that were vacant: And every one of these Ministers were by the Council’s act (July 27th, 1669), strictly enjoined to give due obedience to all the restrictions contained in the King’s letter aforesaid. After the granting of this indulgence, the King’s supremacy, (which was indeed the spring thereof, and had been amply asserted by former acts of Parliament),—is now further explained and extended, by the Parliament that met October 19th that same year: For, by the first act of that session of Parliament, “it is enacted, asserted, and declared,—That the King and his successors have the supreme authority and supremacy over all persons, and in all causes ecclesiastic, within this kingdom; and that, by virtue thereof, the ordering and disposing of the external government and policy of the Church—doth properly belong to them as an inherent right of the Crown; and that they may settle, enact, and emit, such constitutions, acts and orders concerning the administration of the external government of the Church, and the persons employed in the same, and concerning all ecclesiastical meetings, and matters to be proposed and determined therein,—as they in their royal wisdom shall think fit.” After this, several restrictions were laid upon the indulged by the Privy Council: Particularly, by their act January 13th 1670, they discharge them to lecture upon any part of scripture before sermon; with certification, that, if they continue to do so, they shall be discharged to exercise their ministry, within the kingdom.

Afterwards, a second indulgence is granted by the Privy-Council, September 3d 1672: And three several acts were framed about it, that same day*. By the first, a great many of the ousted Ministers, not formerly indulged, are classed and confined by twos and threes in different parishes; and discharged to pass without the bounds of the same: And a committee of Council is empowered to remove any of the Ministers named, from one of the said parishes

parishes to which they are confined to another, as they shall see cause; within six months after the above date of this act. By a second act of the same date, there are several other limitations laid upon them as to the exercise of their ministry, besides these mentioned in the King’s letter: Such as,—“That the indulged, in one and the same diocese, celebrate the communion in one and the same day; that they should not preach in church-yards, or any other places but in kirks,—under the pain of being punished as keepers of conventicles; and that they depart not forth from the parish, without licence from the Bishop of the diocese only; and that, in the exercise of discipline, all causes formerly referable to presbyteries should still in the same manner be referred unto them,” although they were now nothing else but Bishops Courts. And, by a third act of the above date, they discharge all other Presbyterian Ministers except these who are indulged, to exercise any part of their ministerial work, unless they are invited by the Ministers of the parishes where they live; and appoint them, under severe penalties, to attend ordinances in the said parishes.—Thus the indulgence stood, anno 1672: And some years afterwards, when by a public proclamation (March 1st 1676) the above orders and instructions were again strictly enjoined; they are, in the said proclamation, expressly called the terms upon which the indulged Ministers were permitted to preach, and exercise the other functions of the ministry. And, by an act of Council of the same date with the said proclamation,—“The indulged Ministers are discharged to admit any of the Ministers not indulged to their communions or pulpits, under pain of being deposed by the Bishop of the diocese.” From all which it is evident, that the indulgences above-mentioned had their rise, conveyance and subsistence from the blasphemous supremacy usurped over the House of God; and the several acts above-mentioned were the actual exercise of the same: As will plainly appear, if it is considered that the ministerial power and authority for the government of the Church, which the Lord Jesus Christ (the alone head and lawgiver thereof) has conveyed to church-officers
officers as the proper subject and receptacle thereof*,—is, by the act of supremacy, most impiously and sacrilegiously transferred upon the King and his successors, as an inherent right of the Crown; with power to him either to exercise the same in his own person, or by others whom he shall nominate and appoint to execute his orders. Accordingly, in obedience to the commands and by virtue of an authority derived from the King, (whom the Parliament had constituted supreme over all persons and in all causes ecclesiastic),—the Privy-Council assume the actual exercise of church-power; in judging of the gifts and qualifications of Ministers for labouring in such and such parishes, and planting and transplanting them at their pleasure; and in framing and prescribing ecclesiastical canons and instructions, for regulating the exercise of the ministerial office: All which are acts competent only to church officers, by virtue of Christ’s institution; and quite beyond the sphere of the civil magistrate.

And, as a further evidence that the indulgence flowed from the supremacy as the spring thereof,—the Ministers who had the benefit of it were appointed to such and such parishes (with consent of the patron), in virtue of the King’s supreme authority exercised by the Council, without any call from the people, or the interposure of any ecclesiastic authority whatsoever. And these who were restored to their own churches, were not admitted to them by virtue of any former standing relation; but merely by appointment of the Council, in pursuance of his Majesty’s commands signified to them: As is evident from the tenor of the several acts relative to this affair. And though all the Ministers of Christ have their instructions from him alone, and are expressly enjoined to teach the observance of all things whatsoever he has commanded them†; every one of the indulged Ministers were restricted in the exercise of their ministry, by the above-mentioned limitations. And as they were strictly discharged to utter any seditious expressions in the pulpit, or elsewhere; so it is plain, from the acts of Parliament and Council at this time,—that faithful ministerial freedom against the perfidy and treachery

*Matth. xvi. 19. chap. xviii. 18, 20. 2 Cor. x. 8. 11.

†Matth. xxviii. 18, 19, 20.
chery of all ranks of persons (in the present horrid violation of the Oath and Covenant of God, and in rearing up or submitting unto the abjured hierarchy and wicked supremacy), was what was then reckoned seditious.

And though it may be alleged that the ministry of some of the indulged was attended with success, and that the instructions given them were not punctually observed by them all; yet the acceptance of the indulgence in the above complex circumstances, and omitting to give a plain and distinct testimony, in that case of confession, against that wicked supremacy usurped over the House of God,—was a departing from a very material part of the cause and testimony of the Church of Scotland. And it was no small aggravation of the sinfulness of this step, that some Ministers who were in the Council’s nomination never accepted of it; but continued with others of their brethren who were not included in it (notwithstanding of cruel edicts against them), to jeopard their lives in the high places of the field,—testifying and witnessing against the present apostasy and defection from Scotland’s covenanted reformation.

VIII. The whole land was yet further involved in dreadful and heinous guilt,—by the many sinful oaths, declarations and bonds that were imposed; during this period of apostasy and defection, between the year 1660 and 1688. Particularly, by the 11th act of the first session of Parliament anno 1661,—all persons in public trust were obliged to swear the oath of allegiance, or rather supremacy: Whereby they were required to declare, That the King is the only supreme governor over all persons and in all causes; and that they should promote and support his foresaid jurisdiction, against all deadly. Together with this oath, an Instrument assertory of the royal prerogative is appointed to be signed; whereby the subscribers consented to the King’s absolute power, and owned the unlawfulness of resisting him upon any pretext whatsoever: And so not only gave up their civil liberties, but materially renounced the whole work of reformation,—as it was begun at our secession from popery, and as it was carried on in the year 1638; though all was apprroven by King and Parliament,—and, which is more, was signally owned of God. The
Privy-Council, or any having authority from them, were
impowered to impose the said oath and assertory act upon any
whom they pleased: Hence, in a short time, these oaths reached
the most part of the subjects; and became trying badges of
loyalty. If a person was sisted before the Council or other
Courts,—if he swore the allegiance and signed the assertory act,
he was dismissed; but, if be refused, there was no mercy for
him.

Again, by the 5th act of the second session of that same
Parliament (anno 1662), in order to put the gravestone upon the
covenanted reformation,—a Declaration is appointed to be
signed by all persons in public trust: Wherein they were
required to affirm and declare,—“That it is unlawful, upon any
pretext whatsoever, to enter into leagues and covenants, or to
take up arms against the King, or these commissioned by him;
that all the convocations, petitions and protestations, that were
used in the beginning and for carrying on the late troubles,” (i.
e. all that was done for carrying on the work of reformation
from the year 1638,) “were unlawful and seditious; and that the
national Covenant as explained in the year 1638, and the
solemn League and Covenant, were in themselves unlawful
oaths; and that there lieth no obligation upon any of the
subjects, from the said oaths,—to endeavour any change or
alteration in the government, either in Church or State, from the
present establishment by the laws of the kingdom.” This
Declaration became one of the great sins and snares of this
time: Perjury is now made a chief qualification, and necessary
condition of all that were to be admitted to places and offices in
Church and State.

Likewise by an act of Parliament anno 1670* against
people’s separating from the pubic worship in their own
parishes, (i. e. from the perfurred conformists to prelacy),—
heritors and life renters, if they obstinately withdraw from their
parish churches for a certain space of time, must be sisted
before the Council; and required to sign a bond, obliging
themselves, that they shall not, upon any pretext whatsoever,
rise in arms against the King, or any commissioned by him; and
that they shall not assist or

countenance

countenance any who shall rise in arms: And the refusers of this bond are appointed to be secured or banished, and their single or life-rent escheat to belong to the King. This was a snare unto many, and a ground of suffering unto others.

Besides these oaths imposed by authority of Parliament, many other ensnaring oaths and bonds were also enforced by the Privy-Council; such as the bond of peace, appointed to be subscribed anno 1667*: and the bond for regularity, as it was called, (appointed by act of Council August 2d 1667, to be subscribed by all the heritors, &c.),—whereby they bind and oblige themselves, and all under their authority, that they shall not withdraw from the public divine worship in their respective parish-churches; that they shall not have their children baptised, nor be married, but by such Ministers as are lawfully authorised; and that they shall not be present at conventicles, either in houses or the fields;—and all this under heavy and severe penalties.

But that oath called the Test, deserves particular consideration. It was a self-contradictory oath; and had not a parallel among all the oaths ever imposed in any protestant country. It was framed by the Parliament, August 31st 1681. At first, only persons in public trust were obliged to take it; but afterwards it became a general test of loyalty: And was imposed upon all ranks of persons,—and made a handle even of persecuting unto death great numbers, some of whom were of a very considerable rank and quality; and multitudes, who would not comply with it, were grievously oppressed. In the first part of this oath, the protestant religion contained in the first Confession of Faith is professed; and all principles and doctrines contrary to, and inconsistent with the same, are renounced: And yet, in direct contradiction thereto, the King’s supremacy, in the utmost extent, is again and again asserted; together with the unlawfulness of subjects their resisting the sovereign, upon any pretext whatsoever;—the obligation of the Covenants, national and solemn League, is dis-owned;

*By subscribing this bond; persons became obliged (for themselves, their men, tenants and servants), under certain penalties,—to keep the public peace; according to what was then reckoned a peaceable living.
owned; and the government of the Church, then established by law, is approven.—Thus the representatives of the nation, and together with them many of all ranks of persons through the land, make themselves more and more vile; by the blackest perjury, the grossest apostasy and defection from the Lord, that a people or a nation could be guilty of.

IX. The wickedness of this period did rise higher; even to the greatest tyranny and cruelty, exercised upon all such as endeavoured to keep their garments clean in this sinning and defiling day. The above-mentioned acts of Parliament, with the oaths and bonds imposed by the Parliament and Privy-Council,—laid a foundation for near twenty-eight years grievous persecution. A simple non-compliance with the prelatic government then established, declining to attend ordinances dispensed by the Bishops underlings, being present at conventicles in houses or in fields,—refusing the oath of supremacy, or the other oaths and bonds that were imposed,—owning the obligation of our solemn Covenants—and the lawfulness of defensive arms, or of resisting a tyrannical sovereign; were reckoned crimes of the highest nature, and subjected multitudes of all ranks unto unparalleled severity.

During this period, the witnesses for Scotland’s covenanted Reformation endured cruel mockings and scourgings; they wandered about in deserts and in mountains, in dens and caves of the earth,—destitute, afflicted, tormented. Multitudes were banished their native country; others suffered long imprisonment, spoiling of goods, and grievous tortures,—that had not a parallel in any protestant country. Many resisted even unto blood, striving against sin. The most public cities of the nation were defiled with innocent blood; such as Edinburgh, Glasgow, and other cities: Yea, to such an height did cruelty and tyranny arrive,—that many were killed in the open fields, without any legal process*; the merciless soldiers were both their judges and executioners.

This torrent of blood was opened in the martyrdom of the noble Marquis of Argyle, May 27th,—and of the worthy Mr James Guthrie, five days thereafter in the year 1661;

1661; when the Parliament was razing *Scotland’s* covenanted reformation, and planting the *tree of prelacy* and arbitrary power. This *cursed tree* behoved to be soaked with the noble blood of an excellent patriot, a staunch presbyterian, a vigorous asserter of *Scotland’s* liberties; and with the blood of an eminent and faithful Minister of Jesus Christ: And much bitter and bloody fruit did this tree of prelacy bear, in the sufferings unto death of many excellent persons of all ranks; till the beginning of the memorable year 1688, when the torrent stopped in the death of Mr James Renwick. The principal articles of his indictment, and for which he suffered, were his affirming,—that the Duke of York (then King James VII) was not rightful nor lawful King of these realms; and that because he was a Papist, had never sworn the coronation-oath, and was overthrowing the fundamental laws of the kingdom: Also his affirming and defending the lawfulness of defensive arms, both for our civil and religious liberties*. These principles were espoused by this Church, ever since our reformation from popery; and were justified by all the three nations at the Revolution.—Thus, in our *skirts* is found the *blood of the saints*, who suffered during this dismal period. And, if the ordinary course of divine procedure is observed, all ranks in *Scotland* have reason to fear,—that a *land defiled with perjury and blood*, must be purged by blood: Especially when these heinous abominations have never been duly nor seriously considered, nor mourned over†.

X. When apostasy and defection had come to such a prodigious height, as is already mentioned,—the whole *Protestant interest* in the three nations was brought into the greatest danger; by the accession of the *Duke of York* unto the throne, after the death of his brother Charles II anno 1685. He openly professed and declared himself a Papist: And the representatives of the nation, without requiring the coronation-oath, being met in Parliament,—make a declaration and offer of duty unto this popish Prince; wherein they own his absolute power and authority, and promise him obedience without reserve. In con-sequence


†Lev. xxvi. 25. 2 Kings xxiv. 3, 4.
sequence whereof, though the Parliament that met the following 
year refused to rescind the penal statutes against Papists,—yet 
this popish Prince did most tyrannically abrogate and pull down 
these hedges of the reformation, by virtue of his usurped 
supremacy and absolute power: First in his letter to the Privy-
Council, dated August 21st 1686; wherein, by his power 
paramount to the law, he declares his resolution to protect his 
catholic subjects,—and allows them the free exercise of their 
religion in their houses, and appoints the royal chapel at Holy-
rood-house to be fitted up for popish worship;—whereupon the 
land was immediately filled with swarms of Popish priests; and 
a popish school is erected at Holy-rood-house, for corrupting 
the youth. And then, by his proclamation February 12th 1687, 
he does (by his prerogative-royal, sovereign authority and 
absolute power) suspend all penal laws against Papists: Wherein 
also there is liberty granted to these whom he calls moderate 
presbyterians; but it is under such severe restrictions, and so 
manifestly in connection with the toleration of popery (for 
which indeed it was chiefly designed),—that none of the 
presbyterians took the benefit of it.

When several began to be alarmed at such an open and 
violent attack upon the Reformation,—wherein such large 
favours were granted to the Papists, not only as to the exercise 
of their religion, but also capacitating them to enjoy places of 
power and trust; that this toleration was too bare-faced for 
Presbyterians to fall in with: Therefore, that the main design of 
introducing popery might be the better coloured, and the 
Reformation more effectually (though less sensibly) unhinged; 
there comes down a second form of a toleration, in a 
proclamation dated June 28th that same year,—conceived 
indeed in more general terms, but of the same nature and import 
with the former. Therein it is declared, That the Archbishops 
and Bishops, and all subjects of the protestant religion, are to be 
defended in the free exercise of THEIR protestant religion as by 
law established: And likewise, by virtue of the prerogative and 
absolute power, all penal and sanguinary laws, made against 
any for non-conformity to the religion established by law,—or 
the exercise of their respective reli-
gions,
gions, rites, and ceremonies; are stopped, suspended, and disabled: And a liberty is granted to all the subjects, to meet and serve God in their own way and manner,—in private houses, chapels, or places hired or built for the purpose; providing nothing be preached or taught that may any wise tend to alienate the hearts of the people from, the government: And field-meetings are still discharged, under the severest penalties*.

It is evident, from the abrogating of the penal statutes in this as well as the former proclamation,—that this boundless toleration was calculated chiefly in favours of the Papists, as well as the former; although they be not expressly named in it. And yet all the Presbyterian Ministers in the kingdom (excepting a very few) not only accepted the benefit of it; but also a considerable body of them, met at Edinburgh, did send an address of thanks for the foresaid toleration,—dated July 21st 1687, and subscribed in their own name and in name of the rest of the brethren of their persuasion:—Wherein they offer their humble and hearty thanks to that popish Prince; and bless the great God, who put it into his heart to grant them the said liberty, which they call a gracious and surprising favour: Withal promising (in obedience to the above proclamation) an entire loyalty in their doctrine and practice, (consonant to their known principles, contained in the Confession of Faith); and also beseeching, that these who promote any disloyal principles or practices (as they disown them) may be looked upon as none of theirs, whatever name they may assume to themselves†.

The above boundless and illimited toleration was, no doubt, contrary to the principles of the Church of Scotland; contained in her Confession of Faith, and Larger Catechism. The design of the granter, and the tendency of the liberty granted, was the introduction of popery and slavery; its conveyance was from the King’s absolute power, which all were required to obey without reserve,—suspending and disabling all the penal statutes against Papists, whereby all the legal bulwarks of the protestant religion against popery were undermined and overthrown:

Likewise


†---------------------------------- App. No. 135.
Likewise the particular proviso above-mentioned,—“that nothing should be preached or taught, which might any way tend to alienate the hearts of the people from him or his government,” (i. e. in plain terms, That no doctrinal testimony should be emitted against a popish Prince, and his arbitrary government,—overturning the very foundations of our civil as well as religious liberties); was a most sinful and unwarrantable, and, in the present juncture, a most dangerous restriction and limitation upon Ministers in the exercise of their ministry.— From all which it is plain, that the acceptance of this toleration, conveyed after the above manner, with such an address of thanks for it, and without any public joint testimony against the evils contained in it (except that which was offered by Mr Renwick and the few that adhered to him),—was not only stumbling to many, but became one of our public national sins.

The above-mentioned particulars are some instances of the beginning, progress and height of the backsliding and defection of all ranks of persons, between the years 1650 and 1688; from a glorious Reformation formerly attained unto: whereby a reformed land, a land of light, and under the most solemn engagements to the Lord,—became a land of perjury and blood; and was filled with sin against the holy One of Israel. . Wherefore,

The Ministers associate together, being met in Presbytery judge it their duty to testify and bear witness against all these heinous sins and abominations: And they did, and hereby do condemn all the several sins, backslidings and steps of defection from our covenanted Reformation above-mentioned, for the particular reasons and grounds above condescended upon; and all other acts and deeds, in so far as connected with and supporting the above steps of defection;— as contrary to the word of God; and inconsistent with the covenanted principles of this Church,
Church, founded thereon. And they hereby declare, that they were and are just causes of the Lord’s righteous quarrel and controversy with our Princes, our Nobles, Barons, Burgesses, Ministers and Commons of all sorts in the land: And that, for the above heinous sins and provocations, all ranks of persons have reason to mourn before the Lord; lest, by their continued and growing impenitency and obduration, a righteous and holy God be provoked to come out of his holy habitation,—and visit the iniquities of our fathers upon us in this generation, who are many ways serving ourselves heirs unto their sins and backslidings:—

As will appear from the instances afterwards to be given.

Section II. Public Evils from the Revolution, till the Accession of George I.

THIS Church and land having groaned under the yoke of arbitrary government and a hot persecution, for the space of about twenty-eight years; the Lord was graciously pleased to break the yoke from off our necks, by a glorious and surprising appearance for us at the Revolution, in the latter end of the year 1688: Whereof the Prince of Orange was the happy instrument; who was afterwards proclaimed King,—to the joy and satisfaction of all such as had a just sense of the worth and value of their liberties, religious and civil. Wherefore this Presbytery judge it their duty, to commemorate with thankfulness the divine power and goodness manifested in this wonderful work, whereby all the three nations were rescued from popery and slavery.

This deliverance was seasonable as to the juncture, and surprising as to the manner in which it was given. It was brought about at a time when the designs were open and declared, for bringing this land under Antichristian idolatry and darkness; when Papists were advanced to the most
most considerable posts; when the penal statutes against them were abrogated by an absolute dispensing power, assumed and usurped by a *Popish tyrant* supported by a numerous army: And at a time when the whole land was couching under these grievous burdens. Neither was it our *own sword*, or our *own bow*; but *the right hand of the Lord, and his holy arm*, that wrought salvation for us.

It might have been justly expected, upon the back of such a remarkable and great appearance of God,—that *former iniquities* and backslidings should have been *particularly acknowledged*, and the *House of God purged*; and that reformation-work should have been advanced and carried on, after the example and practice of former reforming periods. But, instead of this, our *transgressions are multiplied*; new sins and backslidings are added to our former trespasses and defections. *Forty years* and upwards have we in this generation *grieved the Lord* in the wilderness; *we have sinned with our fathers*, and have not understood his wonders, nor remembered the multitude of his mercies,—though he saved us for his name’s sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known: We have forgot his works, and have not waited for his counsel. And in following councils of flesh and blood, we have declined gradually from him; until our apostasy and defection, in the present age, is come to an height,—in some particular instances, that were not known in former times.

I. When the PARLIAMENT of *Scotland* met immediately after the Revolution, in the *first* session they *abolished prelacy*; as a *great and insupportable grievance* to this nation, and contrary to the inclination of the generality of the people ever since the Reformation,—they having reformed from popery by *presbyters*. And in the *second* session of the same Parliament, *anno 1690*, *presbyterian* church government and discipline is established and ratified; according to the civil ratification and establishment given unto the government of this Church *anno 1592*. Thus a retrograde motion is made near an hundred years backward; and all the legal securities given to this Church in that covenanting period from 1638 to 1650, are *over-*
looked and passed by. Likewise all the acts of the first session of the first Parliament of King Charles II, together with the infamous act rescissory anno 1661, (whereby a covenanted reformation was razed, and the acts and deeds of that covenancing period were declared seditious and treasonable),—are left untouched in this above-mentioned settlement.

Prelacy is never considered as contrary to the word of God, and abjured by our covenants; nor our presbyterian church-government and discipline, as what the land is bound and obliged to maintain by the most solemn oaths and covenants. The indignities done to the national and solemn League and Covenant, and consequently to the most high God the great party in them, are never regarded; but these solemn oaths and covenants are left buried under an act rescissory, and other acts and deeds subversive of them.—If this nation, when an opportunity and season was given them, and when the Lord gave such a remarkable and wonderful deliverance unto them,—did not resent the indignities and injuries done in the former period, to that God whose awful and holy name was interposed in these solemn oaths and covenants; it is a righteous, just, and holy dispensation of providence,—that we should be no more a nation: And that our Noblemen, Barons, and Burgesses, (who had such a golden season and opportunity put into their hands for honouring God, and doing justice to that great name which was abused and profaned in such a dreadful and unparalled manner),—should for ever be deprived of the opportunity of acting by themselves in a parliamentary capacity.

Likewise, by the same Parliament the Oath of Allegiance to the Sovereign is appointed to be sworn,—“in place of any other oaths imposed by laws and acts of preceding Parliaments.” Though it may be said, that this has a respect to the oaths imposed during the persecuting period; yet the terms in which the act is conceived appear plainly to exclude the oath of the Covenant, which contained a very solemn test of allegiance to the sovereign: Especially when it is considered, that the above-mentioned act rescissory was not repealed; and also that the draught of an act, for excluding such as had a share
share in the oppressions of the former period from places of public trust,—was laid aside, after it was twice read in Parliament. Hence such were admitted into places of public trust and power, as were both in principle and practice opposite to a covenanted reformation. Thus, after our great deliverance, we mingled ourselves again with these; and learned of them their ways.

II. The first GENERAL ASSEMBLY of this Church after the Revolution, did sit down anno 1690, under the shadow of the above civil establishment: And never reclaimed against what was defective in the same; but kept measures with the state, in their several acts and deeds at that juncture. It is not here intended to detract from that regard that is due to the memory of these worthy Ministers, and others, who came out of the furnace of a hot persecution; and did bear a part in our first General Assemblies after the Revolution. Yet it is necessary, both for the sake of the present as well as succeeding generations,—to mention some considerable omissions, of which Ministers and many others have complained: And which cannot be otherwise looked upon, than as standing grounds and causes of the Lord’s displeasure and controversy with us; and as one of the springs of the many evils which have, since that time, befallen this Church and land.

It was the laudable practice, in reforming times, to condemn all steps of defection; and duly to censure such as were guilty of public backsliding. Accordingly, by the Assembly that met anno 1638,—all the Prelates, being ringleaders in the apostasy, were deposed; and some of them excommunicate. Also, in the said reforming period, they returned to the Lord,—by a particular acknowledgment and confession of the sins of the Ministry, and of the whole land; and by renewing their solemn covenant-engagements. But the General Assembly that met in the year 1690, made no particular acknowledgment of the many heinous backslidings of the former period: But on the contrary, when many lamentable steps of defection and apostasy were complained of, in a large paper offered to the foresaid Assembly 1690 by Mr Alexander Shields and other two Ministers; the said Assembly was so far from attempting the redress of their grievances,
that they approve the report of their committee of overtures,—
calling them* "Unseasonable and impracticable proposals, 
uncharitable and injurious reflections, tending rather to kindle 
contentions than to compose divisions."

And though many iniquitous and blasphemous statutes were 
made in the two persecuting reigns, for dethroning the glorious 
Redeemer,—and pulling the crown, which he should alone 
wear, from his royal head; yet the Assembly 1690 did not assert 
the divine right of presbytery, and the intrinsic power of the 
Church,—which are two special branches of his glorious 
headship in and over the same. And that power and authority 
given by the Lord Jesus to the office-bearers of his house, to 
hold their meetings in his name,—was not stedfastly adhered 
unto: In regard that, though the King’s Commissioner dissolved 
the Assembly 1692, and though their meetings were adjourned 
from time to time by the King’s proclamation till the year 1694; 
yet there is not any standing testimony against such sinful 
encroachments upon the rights and liberties of Christ’s spiritual 
kingdom.

And neither the foresaid Assembly 1690, nor any of the 
Assemblies of the Church since that time, did by any one formal 
act or statute explicitly and judicially condemn the sacrilegious 
usurpation of his royal dignity,—by that blasphemous 
supremacy, arrogated during that bloody period; nor asserted 
him to be what he really is,—the alone supreme Head and King 
over his Church, as his free and independent kingdom. It is true 
indeed that the Assembly 1690, in their act appointing a 
national fast, own,—“that the supremacy was advanced” (viz. in 
the preceding reigns) “in such a way, and to such a height, as 
ever any Christian Church acknowledged.” Yet they do not 
absolutely condemn that usurped supremacy, nor expressly 
assert the headship and sovereignty of Christ; in opposition to 
the above-mentioned bold and daring invasion made upon it, in 
the late times of lamentable defection and grievous persecution.

Further, they did not expressly approve the covenanted-
reformation of this Church,—attained unto from the year

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*Act 5th, Ass. 1690.
1638 to 1650; nor did they justify the wrestlings, testimonies and sufferings of the Lord’s remnant in the late persecuting times, for the same: Nor has the obligation of our Covenants, national and solemn League, and their binding force upon posterity,—ever been expressly asserted by any particular act of Assembly since the Revolution; nor has the solemn League and Covenant been expressly named, in any of the grounds of national fasting since that time;—though both these might have been expected; considering how these Covenants were so openly violate, and ignominiously burnt, in the former period.

Also, the above-mentioned sinful and conscience-hardening oaths, bonds and declarations, (whereby Christ was sacrilegiously robbed of his royal crown and dignity, his servants oppressed,—by some of which the nation gave up with their valuable civil liberties, as well as their religious privileges,—and by every one of which the land was involved in the dreadful sin and guilt of perjury); yet these bonds and oaths were never expressly and particularly condemned and mourned over. Neither has the subversion of our covenanted-reformation, by these parliamentary deeds which laid a foundation for the tyranny and bloodshed which followed thereupon,—been particularly acknowledged, in any of our acts appointing national fasts since the Revolution.

Neither have such as made defection been duly censured; but, on the contrary, the index of the unprinted acts of Assembly 1690 bears a public declaration by the Moderator,—“That the Assembly would depose no incumbents, simply for their judgment anent the government of the Church:” That is, they declare,—That the perfidious prelates and their underlings were not to be deposed, for their treacherous defection from the covenanted principles of this Church. And, in a consistency with this declaration, the Assembly 1694 * enjoin their commission, (as several Assemblies afterwards did),—“To receive into ministerial communion, such of the late conform Ministers as, having qualified themselves according to law, shall subscribe the Formula” which was then framed for them: Whereby they were not bound

*Act II. Sec. 6.
to acknowledge, that presbyterian government is founded on the word of God; but only,—"that the Church-government, as now settled by law, is the only government of this Church." Nor are elders required to sign any other Formula, to this day.

Upon the signing of the above Formula, a great many prelatical ministers and elders were admitted into the bosom of the Church,—and had access to sit in judicatories; without requiring any evidence of their repentance or sorrow for their heinous and scandalous defection: As will be evident from the Commission’s address to Queen Anne (recorded act 10th, Assembly 1712), wherein they have these words; “We cannot but lay before your Majesty this pregnant instance of our moderation,—that, since our late happy establishment, there have been taken in and continued hundreds of dissenting (i.e. episcopal) ministers, upon the easiest terms.” When these things are duly considered, and former reforming periods and this compared; what a vast difference is there between the house of God in Scotland in its former lustre and glory, and the fabric and building as it was now reared up by Church and State at the Revolution! The above practice, both of Church and State, is contrary to scripture pattern and example; and the practice of reforming times recorded there *

III. Though the above omissions were frequently regreted by Ministers and others; yet it was still alledged, that the land was not ripe to return by solemn national covenanting to the Lord: And that it was not a proper time and season, to be too particular in mentioning public national sins; and in condemning the gross defections and heinous backslidings in the former period. Thus, when the present season and opportunity of necessary duty was neglected, it came to be altogether lost: Particularly when by the treaty of Union, we were brought under the more immediate influence of our neighbours in England; whose principles as to Church-government and discipline, and in several points that concern the worship of God, differ widely from ours.

Our

Our Covenant-union with England, anno 1643, was reckoned the honour and glory of the three lands at that time: it was an Union for carrying on and advancing a work of reformation in England and Ireland,—according to the word of God, and the example of the best reformed churches. But, by the foresaid treaty of Union, we were incorporate with them upon terms opposite unto and inconsistent with our Covenant-union: in regard the maintenance and preservation of the doctrine, worship, government, and discipline of the church of England,—is made a fundamental and essential part of the union of the two kingdoms.

The Commission of the General Assembly that met at that time, being informed that, in the act of ratification of the articles of the treaty of Union, which the Parliament of Scotland were about to pass,—it was declared, That the Parliament of England might provide for the security of the Church of England, as they should think expedient, to take place within the bounds of the kingdom of England: Therefore the said Commission, in their representation and petition of January 16th 1707, given in to the Parliament, remonstrate against the foresaid clause in the act of ratification;—not only as putting a blank in the hands of the Parliament of England, to enact what they should think fit for securing the hierarchy and ceremonies of their Church; but also as a consent on the part of Scotland, that it be an article and foundamental of the Union,—and, as it is contained in the ratification, implying a manifest homologation of the said hierarchy and ceremonies: Therefore they crave, —“That there may be no such stipulation or consent for the establishment of the hierarchy and ceremonies, as they would not involve themselves and the nation in guilt; and as they would consult the peace and quiet of this nation, both in Church and State.” But as the ensuing General Assembly only approved of the proceedings of this Commission in common form,—without an express approbation of their conduct in this particular, though matters of less moment have sometimes been particularly noticed: So the Parliament of Scotland nowise regarded the foresaid representation and petition; having, in their act of ratification given their consent,—That the maintenance
maintenance of the hierarchy and ceremonies in England, should be a fundamental and essential article of the Union.

And though it was then alleged, that the said Union was the best mean to secure our religion and liberties against the attempts of a popish pretender and his adherents: Yet as it was upon terms contrary to our Covenant union; so we hereby declared our confidence in an arm of flesh, and not in the living God, who had so often and so wonderfully saved us from our enemies. And, upon all these grounds and reasons, the foresaid Union may be justly looked upon as contrary to and condemned by the word of God*: Whereupon the said Union is become one of our public national sins. And from this time, instead of making progress in reformation-work, we have been declining and backsliding every day; and have fallen under the weight of such grievances, as shake the foundation of our Presbyterian Church government and discipline. For,

IV. Among the more immediate, bitter and sinful fruits of the foresaid incorporating union; the whole nation was made to groan under the weight of unnecessary, superfluous and sinful oaths: And indeed, because of swearing, to this very day, the land mourneth. How oft are the same oaths repeated, even upon one and the same day; to qualify men to act in different capacities? How often are dealers in candles and leather obliged, to swear? How do many of the trading part of the nation involve themselves in perjury, by the ordinary custom-house oaths at the entry of ships? And how much guilt do they bring upon themselves and the whole land, by running of goods, and such like fraudulent practices; which are frequently attended with a very gross profanation of the Lord’s day? How is the name of God profaned; and the just sense and impression of the importance, weight, and solemnity of an oath,—and also the dreadful guilt and danger there is of rash and false swearing,—worn off the spirits of many, by a frequent and unnecessary repetition of oaths?

Likewise, a superstitious form of swearing was soon introducted among us from England; by laying the hand upon, and kissing the gospels: A very corrupt innovation in that

*Jer. ii. 16, 17, 18, 36, 37. Ezek. xvii. 15. Isa. xxx. 1, 2, 3. chap. xxxi. 1, 2, 3.
that solemn piece of divine worship; and contrary to scripture-pattern, which alone should regulate us,—as in every other part, so in this solemn act of worship. Also the sacramental test*, and conformity to the liturgy and ceremonies of the Church of England,—is required of the members of this Church, while serving the Sovereign in England and Ireland. The Commission of the General Assembly, in their petition to the Parliament of Scotland, November 8th 1706, represented,—That this might prove of most dangerous consequence to the Church; yet, in the treaty of Union, there was no particular provision made against it. The fatal and dangerous consequences of the same, are every day more and more seen; persons of all ranks resorting to England, and conforming occasionally to the liturgy and ceremonies there: That zeal and concern manifested by this Church in former times, for the purity of divine institutions, is gradually decaying,—it is daily languishing; and a nauseous lukewarmness and detestable indifferency doth prevail among us,—about the worship, government and discipline of the Lord’s house.

Also, immediately after the Union, the oath of abjuration was imposed upon all persons in public trust, both civil and military. This oath was framed at first by the Parliament of England; and calculated for the maintenance of their constitution, both in Church and State: And as the Commission, in their last mentioned address, observe,—“It bears a reference to some acts of the English Parliament, wherein are some qualifications required in the successor to the Crown,” (viz. That he should be of the communion of the Church of England, and shall maintain the Church of England as by law established), “which are not suitable to our principles.” In all the above particular instances, the whole land is more and more involved in sin†.

V. In the year 1712, an almost boundless toleration is granted; by which the government and discipline of this Church were exceedingly weakned: And a wide door was opened for laxness in principle, which never fails to bring

*That is,—a taking the sacrament of our Lord’s supper, as dispensed in the Church of England.

bring alongst with it looseness in practice. This toleration, as the then Commission of the General Assembly observed in their address to Queen Anne,—“is such as gives a large licence almost to all error and blasphemy, throws up all good discipline; to the dishonour of God, and the scandal and ruin of the Christian religion.” Tolerations of this kind are contrary to the word of God*; and to the principles of this Church, contained in the Confession [chap. xx. § 4. chap. xxiii. § 3.] and the answer to the question in the Larger Catechism—What are the sins forbidden in the second commandment? And the present was mainly intended and designed for strengthening and supporting a malignant and disaffected party in Scotland,—who, ever since the Revolution, have openly espoused the cause and interest of a popish pretender; and whose meetings, to this day, are not only nurseries of superstition,—but seminaries of disaffection to our sovereign King George, and the protestant succession in his illustrious family.

As this boundless toleration is a stroke and judgment, upon this Church and land; so the growth of error and superstition, the genuine fruits and effects of the same, may be justly reckoned among the causes of the Lord’s wrath against sinful and backsliding Scotland. It deserves also to be noticed, that the English liturgy and ceremonies were never received, even by these of the episcopal denomination in Scotland, till after the late incorporating Union; when a manner of worship, never practiced in Scotland, was set up in all the corners of the land. Together with the said act of toleration, the above mentioned oath of abjuration, which was at first required to be sworn (as is already observed) by all persons in civil and military trust,—was now imposed upon the Ministers of this Church: Which, besides the dismal effects it produced in renting and breaking the ministry among themselves, may be justly reckoned one of our public national sins;—in so far as the united constitution, directly opposite to our Covenant-union, is thereby homologate and sworn unto; and in regard the said oath, together with the allegi-

ance, is substitute in the room of our solemn national Covenants,—which contain the strictest engagements of duty to the Sovereign, a most solemn renunciation of popery, and consequently of all popish Pretenders whatsoever.

VI. In the foresaid year 1712, the right of presentation to vacant congregations; claimed by patrons, was again restored unto them. Against this the Church of Scotland has always testified, as subversive of the right of election belonging to Christian congregations by the word of God; as in the Second Book of Discipline, [chap. xiii.]:—“The liberty of the election of persons called to the ecclesiastical functions, and observed without interruption so long as the Kirk was not corrupted by Antichrist, we desire to be restored and retained within this realm: So that none be intruded upon any congregation, either by the Prince or any inferior person,—without lawful election, and the assent of the people over whom the person is placed; as the practice of the apostolical and primitive Kirk and good order crave.”

As the act of Parliament restoring the right of presentation to patrons, was a heavy stroke upon this Church; so the countenance that has been given unto this antichristian usurpation by the present judicatories of the Church,—in the settlement of Ministers upon presentations from patrons, over reclaiming and dissenting congregations,—is one of the sins and corruptions of the present time;—whereby the Lord Jesus, the only Lord and Lawgiver to his Church, is dishonoured; and his heritage wounded, scattered and broken: As may be afterwards more particularly considered.

VII. Besides the toleration and patronage-acts, countenance is given by authority of Parliament to the observation of holidays in Scotland; by the vacation of our most considerable Courts of Justice in the latter end of December. This superstitious practice was condemned by the acts and constitutions of this Church; and declared, by the General Assembly that met at Glasgow anno 1638, to be abjured by the national Covenant.

These are some instances of the gradual declinings of this Church and land from reformation purity,—that did take
take place between that remarkable and wonderful appearance of divine providence in the year 1688, and the accession of our late sovereign King George to the throne. Therefore this Presbytery judge it their duty to condemn, like as they hereby do condemn, all the foresaid steps of defection, for the several grounds and reasons above condescended upon,—as contrary to the word of God, and our solemn covenant-engagements: And they hereby declare, that they are national sins,—and every one of them may be justly reckoned among the grounds and causes of the Lord’s indignation and controversy with us; for which all ranks of persons have reason to be deeply humbled before the Lord.

Section III. Public Evils from the accession of George I, till the publication of this Testimony.

Article I. A general view of Matters.

Though, instead of making progress in reformation-work,—many valuable pieces of reformation, once attained unto by this Church and land, were not only neglected, but upon the matter given up at the Revolution; and though, instead of holding fast what was then attained unto, the Church of Scotland did lose ground,—and was involved in new steps of declining and backsliding;—and at the same time, though a malignant and disaffected party were unwearied in their plots and projects to destroy any good work the Lord had wrought for us by the Revolution: Yet the Lord, whose name is gracious and merciful, long-suffering, and slow to anger,—dealt not with us according to the desert of our sins; but, under many frowning and wrath-like dispensations of providence, remembred mercy,—and saved us from our enemies, and put them to shame that hated us. Therefore, among the many remarkable appearances of God for his Church and people in this land, this presby-
tery judge it their duty to *commemorate* and *record* with thankfulness,—the deliverance from threatened ruin, that was brought about by the right-hand of the Lord in the years 1714 and 1715: When, in the latter end of Queen Anne’s reign, thick and dark clouds covered us; and when it was evident that designs were not only formed, but very far advanced, for placing a *Popish Pretender* upon the throne of these realms;—which, if they had taken place, would have brought the three nations back into the same miserable circumstances in which they were immediately before the Revolution. But the Lord was graciously pleased to scatter the clouds, and to disappoint these projects; by the *seasonable accession* of our late sovereign King *George* to the throne. This was like another *Revolution*; brought about by his immediate hand, who *cuts off the spirit of Princes*, and appears *terrible to the Kings of the earth*.—No sooner was this deliverance given us, than an *unnatural rebellion* broke forth in our bowels: The interests of a Popish Pretender were openly espoused; and a banner was displayed against the Revolution interest, our sovereign King *George*, and the Protestant succession in his royal Family: And that by a set of men in this land, for whose sake the toleration above-mentioned was granted; and who were always declared enemies of *Scotland’s* covenanted-reformation. But the Lord was graciously pleased to break their measures; to pour shame and contempt upon our enemies, and to turn wars into peace in all our borders.

When the hand of the Lord was so remarkably seen in working *manifold deliverances* for us, it might have been expected that something should have been done for carrying on reformation-work. What could have been done more for his vineyard in *Scotland*, than what he has done? and yet, when he looked that we should have brought forth grapes, we have brought forth *wild grapes*. Since this last deliverance, we have not only fallen asleep,—as if we had no enemy to fear; but, as if we had been delivered to add iniquity to our former trespasses,—corruption in principle and practice is come to a greater height in several instances in this present age, than in any period since our reformation from popery.

Damnable
Damnable and pernicious principles are propagate, which have a tendency to raze the grounds and foundation of our Christian faith. Arian blasphemies and Arminian errors have been vented, in one of our most considerable seminaries of learning; where the youth are trained up for the holy ministry. Serious godliness, and the supernatural work of the Spirit of God upon the souls of men in their effectual calling,—have been treated even from the press, and otherwise, in a very ludicrous manner. And yet the standard of a faithful testimony against the prevailing errors of the time, has not been lifted up by the judicatories of the Church.—A form of godliness, a shadow of religion, takes place of the power and life thereof through the land. The keys of government and discipline, (committed to the office-bearers of the Church by her glorious head, for the edification of his body,—and preserving his institutions in their purity; for purging the house of God of unsound ministers and members, for removing of the offences whereby the flock of Christ may be hurt or stumbled, and for the maintenance of the liberties wherewith Christ hath made his people free), have been perverted to quite opposite ends. The power of religion is daily decaying among us; and the very form of it is despised by many, and by others it is rested upon.

Article II. Professor Simson’s Errors.

But as it is necessary to give particular instances, of the progress and height of the present defection and backsliding; so this presbytery judge it their duty to condescend upon the following.

I. A scheme of pernicious and dangerous principles has been vented by Mr John Simson, professor of divinity in the university of Glasgow; as is evident from the several processes that have been carried on against him.

1st. When he was processed before the judicatories of this Church, in the years 1714, 1715 and 1716; the following dangerous errors are owned and defended by him,—in his answers to the libel given in to the presbytery of Glasgow against him, by the Rev. Mr James Webster, late Minister of the Gospel at Edinburgh.

1. That
1. That “By the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, including tradition; God has given an obscure objective revelation to all men, of his being reconcileable to sinners:” And that “the heathen may know that there is a remedy for sin provided, which may be called an implicit and obscure revelation of the gospel:” and that “it is probable none are excluded from the benefit of the remedy for sin provided by God, and published twice to the whole world,—except those who, by their actual sin, exclude themselves; and slight and reject the clearer light of the gospel revealed to the Church, or that obscure discovery and offer of grace made to all without the Church*:” And that “if the heathen would in sincerity and truth, and in the diligent use of means that providence lays to their hand, seek from God the knowledge of the way of reconciliation,—necessary for their acceptable serving of him, and being saved by him; he would discover it to them†.” Likewise he affirms, “that there are means appointed of God for obtaining saving grace; which means, when diligently used with seriousness, sincerity, and faith of being heard,—God has promised to bless with success: And the going about these means in the foresaid manner, is not above the reach of our natural ability and power‡.”

All these propositions are directly contrary to the doctrine held forth, from the word of God, in our Confession of Faith: Particularly, chap. i. § 1.;—where, according to the scriptures cited, we are taught, that,—“Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the “goodness, wisdom and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet they are not sufficient to give that knowledge “of God and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation.” Whereas, by the above propositions, Mr Simson affirms,—That the end and design of natural religion is, not only to leave men inexcusable; but that thereby an obscure offer of grace is given them, and an implicit revelation of the gospel made unto them: And that the benefit of

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*Answers to Mr Webster’s libel, p. 77, 78, 79. 115.
†-----------------------------, p. 80.
‡Ibid. p. 216.
the remedy provided for sin extends to all without the Church, who do not slight and neglect this obscure discovery and offer of grace: And therefore this obscure revelation and offer of grace is such, as lays a foundation for the heathen, in the diligent use of the means which providence lays to their hands,—their seeking in sincerity and truth the knowledge of the way of reconciliation: Whereby some kind of sufficiency is given to natural religion; yea such a sufficiency, as lays a foundation and ground for hope and confidence towards God,—for obtaining some way or other reconciliation to him, and consequently eternal salvation;—contrary to Eph. ii. 12; where the whole heathen world are declared to be without God and without hope. And, whatever advantages the heathen may be supposed to have by tradition, yet the apostle testifies,—That the world by wisdom knew not God: And they were so far from seeking after the knowledge of the way of reconciliation, that when it was published unto them by the gospel,—they rejected the same as foolishness, and not agreeable to their carnal reasonings*.

Besides, by the above propositions, mens natural powers and abilities, whether they be within or without the Church,—are exalted to the dishonour of God, to the disparagement of his sovereign and efficacious grace:—And in direct contrariety to that miserable state and condition, into which all mankind are brought by their apostasy from God in the first Adam; being dead in trespasses and sins, under the power of spiritual darkness,—and not only enemies to God, but by nature enmity against him: As is held forth from the scriptures in our Confession of Faith, [chap. ix. § 3.]; “—Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin,—is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereto.”

The above propositions, concerning man’s powers and abilities in a natural state, are more dangerous; when it is considered, that Mr Simson rejects the ordinary answer given

*1 Cor. i. 21, 25. Isa. lxv. 1. with Rom. x. 20.
given by our orthodox divines to a Pelagian objection, *viz.* That "it is unjust in God, to command what we have no power to perform." All reformed divines make answer,—That we had sufficient power and ability in Adam, but have lost it by our fall; and though we have lost power to obey, yet God has a just right to command.—This answer Mr Simson rejects as no way sufficient; and subtitutes what is contained in the above propositions, in the room of it*: Whereby, instead of removing the objection, he gives up the cause of truth to the Pelagians and Arminians; to the dishonour of God, and hardening of these gross perverters of the truth,—and to the subverting and poisoning of those with whom he was intrusted, to train up for the holy ministry.

2. The said Mr Simson maintains and defends,—That "there was no proper Covenant made with Adam for himself, and his posterity†:" That "Adam was not a federal head to his posterity‡:"—And that "if Adam was made a federal head, it must be by divine command; which is not found in the Bible.”—The above propositions are contrary to the doctrine held forth, from the word of God, in our Confession, [chap. vi. § 3. chap. vii. § 2.]; and the answer to the question in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms,—*Did all mankind fall in Adam’s first transgression?*

The above gross and erroneous propositions, are the foundation and ground of a chain of principles connected with them; whereby the reformed doctrine, contained in our Confession of Faith, is undermined and overturned. For, by the denial of the federal representation, the proper imputation of Adam’s first sin falls to the ground: And though the Professor pretends to maintain the imputation of Adam’s first sin from the sanction of the law; yet his reasoning amounts to no more, than that his posterity are punished for the same. When Adam’s federal representation of his posterity is disowned,—his first sin can no more be called theirs, than the sins of their immediate parents. That this proper imputation of Adam’s first sin is denied by him, will further appear from the following gross and dangerous propositions which he maintains and defends. For

3. He

3. He affirms,—That “it is inconsistent with the justice and goodness of God, to create a soul without original righteousness, or any disposition to good:*” And that “the souls of infants since the fall, as they come from the hands of their Creator, are as pure and holy—as the souls of infants would have been created, supposing man had not fallen:” And that “they are created as pure and holy as Adam’s was,—except as to these qualifications and habits which he received, as “being created in an adult state†.”—These propositions are directly contrary to the doctrine held forth from the word of God in our Confession; [chap vi. § 2, 3.4]; and the answer to the question in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms,—Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell? and the answer to the question in the Larger Catechism,—How is original sin conveyed from our first parents to their posterity?

4. Mr Simson also affirms and defends,—That “it is probable that, of the whole race of mankind, more are elected and saved than reprobated and damned‡.” He owns, that of the adult, or these come to years—it is plain from scripture, that the “most part are neither elected nor saved:” But that he may account for the number of the elected and saved, he asserts,—That “it is more than probable that baptized infants, dying in infancy, are all saved||,” and that “it is manifest if God should deny his saving grace to all or any of the children of infidels, he would deal more severely with them than he did with the fallen angels¶.”

By the above propositions, Mr Simson judges it probable,—that all infants, dying in infancy, are included in the decree of election; which is very agreeable to the Arminian scheme,—which teacheth, That the decree of election is influenced from foreseen conditions and qualifications in the creature: But contrary to the doctrine held forth, from the word of God in our Confession, [chap. iii. §.5];—“Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid,

“according

* Answers, p. 225
‡ Answers, p. 226.
| Answers, p. 226.
|| Answers, p. 226.
| Answers, p. 226.
“according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret
counsel and good pleasure of his will,—hath chosen in Christ
unto everlasting glory, out of his mere grace and love; without
any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either
of them,—or any other thing, in the creature, as conditions or
causes moving him thereto; and all to the praise of his glorious
grace;” — and consequently, without any regard to their infant
or adult state. It is plain from the scriptures,—that God hath
chosen some of mankind to eternal life, out of his mere good
pleasure allenarly: [Rom. ix. 11.] For the children being not yet
born, neither having done any good or evil; that the purpose of
God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him
that calleth;—[Ver. 13.] As it is written, Jacob have I loved; but
Esau have I hated.

Besides, by the above propositions, he maintains the cer-
tainty of the salvation of all infants; when he challengeth his
Maker with exercising greater severity towards them, in case he
should deny his saving grace to any of them,— than is exercised
towards the fallen angels: Especially when this is compared
with his other proposition, noticed above,—That “none are
excluded from the benefit of the remedy for sin provided, but
these who by their actual sins exclude themselves.”—All these
propositions have an evident tendency to lead men to low
thoughts of the evil and desert of original sin, imputed and
inherent. Likewise, if the above doctrine taught by Mr Simson is
true, then there is no ground to fear the damnation of any upon
the account of original sin; though it is the bitter fountain and
spring of all our actual transgressions, and makes us children of
wrath by nature: According to the doctrine held forth, from the
word of God, in our Confession, [chap. vi. § 6.];—“Every sin,
original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of
God, and contrary thereto, doth in its own nature bring guilt
upon the sinner; whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God
and curse of the law, and so made subject to death,—with all
miseries, spiritual, temporal and eternal.”

5. Mr
5. Mr Simson likewise impugns the immediate previous divine concourse with all the actions of the reasonable creature; and in place thereof affirms,—That “God may determine infallibly all the actions of reasonable creatures, that are not above their natural powers, and are not contrary to their natural inclinations and dispositions,—by placing them in such circumstances, by which they have a certain series and train of motives laid before them; by which they may infallibly, yet freely, produce such a series of actions as he has decreed.” And “this (says he) maybe sufficient for ascertaining all the events of sinful actions; and of the ordinary, natural and civil actions of men*.” It is true, the providence of God is a great depth; his judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out. The terms that have been used by reformed divines, in explaining the doctrine of providence, some of them are not in our Confession; being nowise adapted to vulgar capacities. Yet the immediate divine concourse with all the actions of the reasonable creature, has been affirmed and maintained by reformed divines,—in opposition to Jesuits and Arminians: And is necessary for maintaining and asserting the absolute dominion of God over the free actions of reasonable creatures; and their immediate dependence upon him in motion and action,—as well as in their being, and preservation in the same: Whereas the way whereby Mr Simson explains the divine providence about all the actions of reasonable creatures, leaves the creature independent in motion and action upon the adorable Creator:

Though some of the ordinary terms, that are used by divines upon this subject, are not in our Confession of Faith; yet the doctrine of the immediate previous divine concourse with all the actions of the reasonable creature, as it is explained by our reformed divines,—is plainly held forth therein from the word of God, [chap. v. § 4.];—“The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his providence,—that it extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men: And that not by a bare permission; but such as hath joined with it a most wise

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*Answers, p. 124.
“wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to his own holy ends: Yet so as the sinfulness proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God; who, being most holy and righteous, neither is, nor can be the author or approver of sin:” —And the answer to the question in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, *What are God’s works of providence?*

6. Mr Simson likewise affirms and maintains,—That “a regard to our own happiness, and the prospect of our eternal felicity and blessedness in the enjoyment of God in heaven, ought to be our chief motive in serving the Lord upon earth*.” He also affirms, upon the answer to the first question of the Catechism,—That “our glorifying God, being the means,—is subordinate to our enjoyment of him for ever, which is our ultimate end†:” and That, “were it not for the prospect of happiness, we could not, and therefore would not serve God‡.” —As Mr Simson perverts the doctrine held forth from the scriptures, cited upon the answer to the first question of our Larger and Shorter Catechisms: So, as the Committee of the General Assembly 1727 very justly observe (*State of the Process*, p. 277.), “—What is set forth in the above article, is contrary to the instinct of that new nature the Lord endueth all his people with in regeneration; which makes them, by the further influence of grace, desire to serve God for himself and his supereminent excellencies,—and not merely, or chiefly, for the prospect of their own happiness; whence it is their greatest burden, that they cannot more serve him for himself. And considering how much all men are bound to make the glory of God their chief end, though yet they are called herewith to pursue happiness; and likewise that it is through a prevailing respect to God’s honour and glory, and not a mere or chief respect to our own happiness, that the difference between nature and grace is to be cleared to the doubtful Christian: Therefore,—it is no small dishonour to God, to teach what is set down

*Answers, p. 139,—155. † Answers, p. 140. ‡ --------- p. 149.
“in the above articles; and that the contrary was necessary to be taught.”

7. Mr Simson also maintains, and defends it as his opinion,—That “there will be no sinning in hell, after the last judgment*.” This absurd opinion is contrary to the doctrine held forth in our Confession and Catechisms; where, according to the scriptures, we are taught,—“That sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the law of God.” And since it is certain, that the natures of the damned in hell were never renewed, they can have no manner of conformity to the law of God: And from their corrupt and unrenewed natures, must necessarily flow the highest enmity and rage against the justice and holiness of God in punishing of them; which is expressed in scripture by gnashing of the teeth†.

2dly, By another process against the said Mr Simson, begun before the Presbytery of Glasgow anno 1726,—and carried on before the judicatories till the Assembly 1729, when it was concluded; the said Mr Simson was found guilty of many other gross and dangerous errors: In regard, it was found clearly proven,— “That, in teaching his students, he had denied the necessary existence of our Lord Jesus Christ;” —and that he had affirmed, “That his necessary existence is a thing we know not;” and “that the term necessary existence is impertinent, and not to be used when talking of the Trinity;” and “that the three persons of the adorable Trinity are not to be said to be numerically one in substance or essence;” and “that the terms, necessary existence, supreme Deity, and the title of the only true God, may be taken, and are by some authors taken in a sense that includes the personal property of the Father;—and so not belonging to the Son.” By all which propositions, the supreme Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the second person of the adorable Trinity,—as also the supreme Deity of the Holy Ghost, our comforter and sanctifier,—is blasphemously impugned and denied by the said Mr Simson: in direct opposition to the scriptures of truth; and the doctrine held forth from them in our

Confession

* Answers, p. 233. † Matth. viii. 12.
Confession of Faith, [chap. 2. § 1, 3. chap. 8. § 2.]: Answer to the question in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, “How many persons are there in the Godhead?” And Larger Catechism, Quest. 11.

It deserves also to be observed, that some hypotheses adopted by Mr Simson, and which tend to attribute too much to natural reason,—are the very spring of the above dangerous errors vented and taught by him. In his second letter to Mr Rowan, he adopts the following Socinian propositions,—“That reason, as it is taken for evident propositions, naturally revealed, is the principle or foundation of theology; and that nothing is to be admitted in religion, but what is agreeable to reason, and determined by reason to be so.” Although Mr Simson pretends to disown these propositions, as they are maintained and explained by the Socinians; yet it is obvious from the plain meaning of the words, that the above propositions, adopted by him, exalt reason above divine revelation: Contrary to the doctrine held forth in our Confession of Faith, [chap. 1. § 10.],—“The supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest; can be no other but the Holy Spirit, speaking in the scriptures;” And contrary to the answer to the second question, in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. Mr Simson having once set reason in the chair, and exalted it to be judge in principles of faith; it is no wonder, that he rejects the testimony of God in his own word, concerning the Covenant-headship and representation of the first Adam,—and the many sacred truths that are connected with that important article; and that he has maintained the other errors charged against him in the first process. From the same source and spring also,—he was at length led to impugn and deny the supreme Deity and necessary existence of him—whose name is Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace*.

*Isa. ix, 6.
This PRESBYTERY considering, that the purity of doctrine, maintained in this Church, is very much endangered by the above gross and pernicious errors; and that many may be in hazard of being tainted with them, in a day wherein atheism and infidelity do so much abound: Therefore they Did, and hereby Do, upon the weighty grounds and reasons above narrated, C O N D E M N, as contrary, to the word of God, our Confession of Faith and Catechisms,—the several propositions above-mentioned, maintained and defended by Mr Simson, viz ‘Ratio, ut fumitur pro propositionibus naturaliter revelatis, est principium seu fundamentum theologiae*;’ and ‘that nothing is to be admitted in religion, but what is agreeable to reason, and determined by reason to be so: That by the light of nature, and works of creation and providence, including tradition,—God hath given an obscure objective revelation to all men, of his being reconcilable to sinners;’ and ‘that the heathen may know, that there is a remedy for sin provided; which may be called an implicit or obscure revelation of the gospel: That it is probable none are excluded from the benefit of the remedy for sin, provided by God, and published twice to the world; except those who by their actual sins exclude themselves,—and slight or reject the clearer light of the gospel revealed to the Church, or that obscure discovery and offer of grace made to all without the Church: That if the heathen, in the use of the means they have, would seek the knowledge of the way of reconciliation; God would discover it to them: That there are means appointed of God, for obtaining saving grace; which means, when diligently used with seriousness, sincerity, and faith of being heard,—God hath promised to bless with success; and the going about these

*means

*A little before, there is a translation of this Latin sentence, viz. “Reason, as it is taken for evident propositions, naturally revealed, is the principle or foundation of Theology.”
'means in the foresaid manner, is not above the, reach of our natural ability and power:—That there was not a proper Covenant made with Adam, for himself and his posterity: That Adam was not a federal head, to his posterity;' and 'that, if Adam was made a federal head it must be by divine command, which is not found in the Bible:—That it is inconsistent with the justice and goodness of God, to create a soul without original righteousness or dispositions to good: that the souls of infants since the fall, as they come from the hands of their Creator,—are as pure and holy as the souls of infants would have been created, supposing man had not fallen;' and 'that they are created as pure and holy as Adam’s was created,—except as to those qualifications and habits which he received, as being created in an adult state: That it is more than probable, that all baptised infants dying in infancy, are saved;' and ‘that it is manifest, if God should deny his saving grace to all or any of the children of infidels, he would deal more severely with them, than he did with the fallen angels:—That there is no immediate previous divine concourse, with all the actions of the reasonable creature:’ And, ‘that a regard to our own happiness, and prospect of our eternal felicity and blessedness in the enjoyment of God in heaven,—ought to be our chief motive in serving the Lord upon earth:’ and, ‘and that our glorifying God, being the means,—is subordinate to our enjoyment of him for ever, which is our ultimate end;’ and ‘that, were it not for the prospect of happiness, we could not, and therefore would not serve God: that there will be no sinning in hell, after the last judgment.’ And the PRESBYTERY hereby declare all these propositions vented and taught by the said Mr Simson, to be dangerous and pernicious errors, dishonouring to a God of truth, and having an evident tendency to subvert the souls of men.

As also this PRESBYTERY did and hereby do CONDEMN, the several propositions found clearly
clearly proven against the foresaid Mr Simson by several General Assemblies of this Church,—Annis 1727, 1728, and 1729:—such as, “That our Lord Jesus Christ is not necessarily existent; that the necessary existence of our Lord Jesus Christ, is a thing we know not; that the term necessary existence is impertinent, and not to be used in talking of the Trinity: that the three persons of the Trinity are not to be said to be NUMERICALLY One in substance or essence: That the terms necessary existence, supreme Deity, and the title of the only true God,—may be taken in a sense that includes the personal property of the Father, and so not belonging to the Son.” All which propositions they did, and hereby do declare to be damnable heresies; denying the Lord that bought us, subverting and overthrowing one of the principal foundations of our Christian faith: And to be blasphemous indignities, done to the person of the eternal Son of God our Redeemer; as also unto the person of the Holy Ghost our Sanctifier and Comforter: Whereby these adorable persons are robbed of their true and supreme Deity, and reduced into the class and rank of dependent and inferior beings. As also they did, and hereby do declare,—That the said Mr Simson, in regard of the atrocious and heinous nature of the foresaid errors, deserved not only suspension from teaching and preaching; but to have been deposed from the office of the holy ministry,—and excommunicated from all society, communion and fellowship with the Church and people of God: Until he gave satisfying evidences of his repentance and sorrow, for teaching and spreading the foresaid dangerous errors and blasphemies.
Article III. Professor Campbell’s errors, and the Assembly’s conduct with him.

II. A SCHEME of most pernicious and dangerous principles has been vented by Mr Archibald Campbell, Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of St Andrews; as is evident from the books he hath published, and from his explications and defences in the process that has been laid against him: In which the following gross errors are defended by him.

1st, That “the sole and universal motives to virtuous actions is self-love, interest, or pleasure*. That “self-love is the great cause, or the first spring of all our several motions and actions; which way soever they may happen to be directed†.” That “self-love is universally the first spring in every rational mind; that awakens her powers, begins her motions, and carries her on to action‡.” That “men may refuse to worship God,—unless he presents himself favourably inclined to their interest, and studious of their happiness§.” That, “we are to settle it as our main purpose,—to recommend ourselves to the love, esteem and commendation of God, and of all mankind,—by our moral virtue||.” That “self-love, as it exerts itself in the desire of universal, unlimited esteem,—is the great commanding motive that determines us to the pursuit of virtue¶.” And that, “seeing God acts for his self-interest,—we cannot act from any higher principle than our self-interest**.”

All the above propositions are directly contrary to the word of God: In which it is expressly asserted,—that all our religious actions must proceed from a new nature, and from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and from a holy regard and love to God; and not from self-love or self-interest, as their first spring and principle, [Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. Acts xxvi. 18. John xv. 4, 5. Math. xxii.

* Enquiry into the original of Moral Virtue, p. 463.
† -------- p.4.
§ -------- p. 460.
¶ -------- p. 257, 258.
|| -------- p. 273.
** -------- p. 432.
—and that our main purpose or ultimate end ought not to be the advancement of our own self-interest, but the glorifying of God; that is, the advancement of his declarative glory, [2 Cor. v. 15. Rom. xiv. 7. Rom. xv. 1,2, 3. John v. 30. John vii. 18. 2 Tim. iii. 2. to 5]. In which places of scripture it is declared,—that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, whose example we are to imitate, pleased not himself, and sought not his own will, nor his own glory; but the will and glory of his Father that sent him: And that to be lovers of our own selves, that this, to love ourselves inordinately,—is one of the blackest of crimes. And it must needs be an inordinate self-love, when, according to Mr Campbell, our self-interest or happiness is made the chief and leading motive of our love to God: since, according to this selfish-scheme, we love God not for himself, or for his own sake,—but for ourselves: Whereby we prefer ourselves to our Maker, and love ourselves more than the adorable Creator; which may be justly reckoned the greatest impiety.

It must also be observed, that as the declarative glory of God, or the manifestation of his being and the glorious excellencies and perfections of his nature,—is the chief end of God in all his works, (for the Lord hath made all things for himself, Prov. xvi. 4.);—so it is very gross and absurd in Mr Campbell to affirm, “That our self-interest must be the great cause and first spring of all our several actions; and that our self-love is the great commanding motive, that determines us to the pursuit of virtue: And that because” (as he thinks fit to express himself) “the Deity is studious of the good of his creatures from self-interest*.” Thus he wickedly argues,—That we, in acting from our self-interest, imitate God; and cannot act from a higher and more perfect principle, What is this else, but to usurp the throne of God; and to exalt ourselves, if not above him, at least unto an equality with him? It is an ambitious aspiring to that very thing which, through the subtilty of Satan, was the inlet at the beginning to our sinful and shameful apostasy from our Maker; Gen. iii. 5. And ye shall be as gods.

But the whole scope and design of divine revelation is, to recover us from these selfish principles into which all mankind

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*Enquiry, p. 432 ??
mankind are plunged by the fall; and to bring us back to our primitive love, obedience, and subjection to JEHOVAH. And the whole word of God proclaims unto us, That as the Lord hath done all things for himself, (that is, for the manifestation of his own infinite and glorious excellencies); so the most noble imitation of God is, to love him chiefly for himself: And to yield subjection and homage unto him, because he is God; and that he may be glorified in our bodies and spirits, which are his. This is the great end and design of the whole economy of grace; and of the dispensation of the divine Spirit to sinners, in effectual calling and regeneration: That they may be animate and moved from this higher and more excellent spring and principle, in all the duties of their obedience to God,—and in every relative duty towards men with whom they are associate; as is evident, not only from the above, but also from the following scriptures, [1 Cor. x. 31. and vi. 20. Mat. v. 16. Rom. xi. 36. Psal. cxv. 1. Rev.iv. 8,11. Rev. v. 13.].

It is also evident from the word, that God’s infinite perfection, and his glorious excellencies,—are the main ground and reason of our loving, obeying, and worshipping him; and not chiefly his benefits to us, and his promoting our happiness. Therefore it is blasphemy to say,—That we might refuse to worship God, if it were not for the prospect of promoting our own happiness. For though God allows us to pursue happiness, and though the prospect of it may be a secondary motive to our obedience; yet the scriptures declare,—That what God is in himself, or his own infinite perfection, is the primary ground and formal reason of the whole of our obedience and worship*. It must likewise be observed, that, in our best and most virtuous actions,—we can never recommend ourselves to the love, favour, and esteem of God; as Mr Campbell affirms: In regard his love and favour to any of his creatures, and much more to sinful men, is absolutely free. As they cannot merit his favour; so there is no motive without himself, to move him to love them.—Hos. xiv. 4, I will love them freely. Deut. vii. 7, 8. The Lord did set his love upon you,—be-

cause the Lord loved you. Rom. ix. 13. Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated: Compared with verse 11th,—The children not being yet born, neither having done any good or evil; that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of him that calleth. And whatever we do, we must still reckon ourselves unprofitable servants.

The above propositions are likewise contrary to our Confession of Faith and Catechisms: Conf. —[chap. vi. § 7.], wherein it is asserted from the word of God,—“That works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others; yet because they proceed not from an heart purified by faith, nor are done to a right end, the glory of God,—they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God:” —and to Larg. Cat. [quest. 190, 196.], and Less. Cat. [quest. 101, 107.]: And Larg. Cat. and Less. Cat. [quest. 1st]; wherein it is said,—“That man’s chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him for ever;” —And to Less. Cat. [quest. 47.]; where “the not worshipping and glorifying the true God as God,” —is the great sin forbidden in the first commandment: And to Larg. Cat. [quest. 105.]; where “self-love, self-seeking,—and all other inordinate and immoderate setting of our mind, will, or affections upon other things; and taking them off from God, in whole or in part;” —are affirmed, from the scriptures there cited, to be among the sins forbidden in the first commandment.

Mr Campbell also affirms,—That “self-interest or pleasure is the only standard by which we can judge of the virtue, i.e. the value or goodness, of any action whatsoever*. That “virtue and utility, are two words signifying the same thing†.” That “the intrinsic goodness or rectitude of moral virtue, lies directly in the fitness of it to the self-love and happiness of mankind;” and that “actions are virtuous, only as they promote self-interest‡.”

And that “moral goodness, as well as natural, lies in advantage and pleasure*.” And that “we like and approve all the moral qualities that are called virtuous, for no other reason but for their being good to us; i.e. for the pleasure they give us, or for their gratifying our self-love†.” And that “the goodness of any action, from which it is denominate moral virtue, immediately lies in the conformity it has to our self-love; while it concurs and co-operates with this principle, in approving our being happy,—and to secure and promote our well-being‡.”

These propositions do directly contradict the holy scriptures: In which it is expressly declared,—That the law of God is the adequate and only standard by which the goodness of actions is to be tried; and not our own self-interest and pleasure§. And in regard the holiness of God is manifested in his law, and his sovereign authority is interposed therein; the goodness of our actions doth immediately lie in their conformity to the holy law of God,—and in the being done by faith in Christ, and from a respect to the authority of God the Lawgiver. And there is nothing more contradictory to the whole word of God, than to assert,—that the goodness of our love to God and his Son Jesus Christ or of any act of obedience and devotion, lies directly in its fitness to promote our personal interest||.—

And the above propositions do likewise contradict our Confession of Faith and Catechism, [Conf. Chap. 1 § 2. Chap. xvi. § 1, 2. Larg. Cat. Quest. 3. Less. Cat. Quest. 2.]: where it is asserted,—That the scriptures “are given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life;” and that they are “the only rule of faith and obedience.”

Mr Campbell also asserts,—That “virtue depends not on the arbitrary will of any being, but flows from the essen-

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‡ ----------- p. 319, 320.

“essential properties and nature of things*;” and that “God’s interests are not in all respects independent on us;” that “our happiness is advantageous to God’s nature;” and that “self-love determines God to be studious of our good;” And that “God cannot but reward the virtuous from self-love†.”

These propositions are contrary to the holy scriptures: in which it is asserted,—That God himself, in the wise purpose and counsel of his own will, laid down the whole plan of the nature and relation of things; which he freely brings forth in his works of creation, providence and redemption. And though the precepts of the moral law are eternal and immutable; in regard the holiness and perfection of God’s nature is such, that it cannot be his will that his creatures should do otherwise: Yet the scriptures also assert—That God is our Lawgiver, and affirm his absolute sovereignty and authority over us,—and consequently, that nothing can be a law to us but by his enacting; and that what he enacts must be a law to us,—whether it be a moral precept, or a thing in its own nature indifferent;—as is evident from the positive precept given to Adam at his creation; and from other positive commands, both under the Old and New Testaments ;—which, although they were all wise and good, yet who can say that God was necessarily obliged by his own nature to enact them; and that he could not possibly have done otherwise? It is therefore grossly erroneous, to set up the nature and relation of things as a law above God himself; and to maintain, that moral good and evil flow from the essential properties and nature of things,—and not from the holiness of God’s nature allenarly, together with his sovereign authority and will manifested in his law: As is evident from the following scriptures, [Eph. i. 5. 11. Rom. ix. 15.—24. Rev. iv. II.] The above propositions are also contrary to the doctrine held forth from the word of God, [Conf. Chap. viii. § 1. Chap. xix. § 5. Larger Cat. Quest. 12.].

From the word of God, and our Confession of Faith, we are also taught,—that creatures can merit no good from 

God: And that he is not obliged to reward their services; and that all the rewards he has promised to any of them, are free and unmerited: And that they can have no fruition of God as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on his part; which he has been pleased to express by way of covenant: As also, that he whose name is JEHOVAH hath all life, glory, blessedness and goodness, in and of himself; and stands not in need of any of his creatures, nor derives any glory from them. Therefore it is grossly erroneous in Mr Campbell to affirm as above, “That God cannot but reward the virtuous from self-love.” Yea, it is blasphemy in him to affirm,—“that our happiness is advantageous to God’s nature; and that God’s interests are not altogether independent on us*.”

The General Assembly 1736 having had Mr Campbell’s writings under their consideration, in which he has vented the above propositions; it is to be observed with regret, That “they find, with respect to the third article concerning self-love, he had declared he meant no more,—but that our delight in the glory and honour of God is the chief motive of all virtuous and religious actions: And are of opinion, that the examining and stating of the matter, as has been done by the committee for purity of doctrine,—is sufficient for cautioning against the errors that some at first supposed Mr Campbell was guilty of; and do appoint that the matter rest here.” From all which, compared with the report of the committee, taken into the preamble of the act; it is very manifest, that the Assembly have adopted this proposition of Mr Campbell’s as in their opinion sound and orthodox, viz. That our delight in the glory and honour of God, is the chief motive of all virtuous and religious actions. And that they have taken it up in the same sense and meaning of the terms in which Mr Campbell, who delivered it, appears to have understood it, from his explications then under consideration,—is as certain, as it

is plain from the act itself, that the design of the Assembly and committee (in hearing and considering this declaration of Mr Campbell’s, and the other explications he offered) was, To do something that was sufficient for cautioning against the errors that some at first had supposed he was guilty of.

But the above proposition, considered in a relation to his scheme of principles, and his explications then under consideration,—is manifestly gross and erroneous; and is very agreeable to the scheme of selfish love he has laid down in his Enquiry: as appears from his further Explications, and Remarks on the Report of the committee; which, together with this short declaration of his sentiments, were laid before the Assembly,—as his defences in the charge laid against him. He concludes his defences upon this head, in his further Explications, as follows*; “I hope the reverend committee will judge, that my opinion about the supreme motive—is in no degree an exclusion of the glory of God from being our chief end: and that true philosophy justifies my professing, as I have done in my (first) explications,—That the glory of God, or God in his glorious perfections and excellencies, is our chief and our ultimate end; and our prevailing desire after happiness in this glory of God, or in God an infinite good, the great fountain of all life and of all perfection,—is the supreme motive that excites us, and that animates our vigorous endeavours, to attain to him.” And in his remarks on the committee’s Report [page 47.], he asserts,—“That the agent’s self-love, or a man’s own happiness, is the motive whereby he is excited to the pursuit of such sort of (good or virtuous) actions.”

The matter stands briefly thus.—The Assembly have assozized Mr Campbell from the charge of error that some at first supposed he was guilty of; in respect that, as to the 3d article concerning self-love, he had declared he meant no more, — but that “our delight in the glory and honour of God was the chief motive of all virtuous and religious actions.” But if the terms of this proposition are considered and compared with his defences

*Further Expl. p. 78, 79.
as above, it will be manifest,—that by the honour and glory of God, Mr Campbell does not understand the declarative glory of God: but God in his glorious excellencies and perfections, or God an infinite Good; and by our delight in the glory and honour of God, he understands our prevailing desire after happiness in this glory of God,—or in God an infinite Good. And when he affirms, that our delight in the honour and glory of God is the chief motive to all virtuous actions; he understands, —that the agent’s self-love, or a man’s own happiness in this glory of God, or in God an infinite good, is the chief motive whereby he is excited to the pursuit of religious and virtuous actions: which is the same thing with the error that some at first supposed he was guilty of, viz. That self-love is the chief motive to all such actions.

This might be further illustrate from what he says, page 70 and 78 of his further Explications; and p. 40 and 48 of his Remarks. But the case is so plain of itself, and from what has been observed,—that nothing is necessary to be added; except to lament, that God has left this Church so far as to adopt this error: And that he so far deserted some worthy men, as not to notice it; and testify against it in a way of protestation, for the honour of truth. It shall only be further observed on this head, — that no other meaning can be imposed on the proposition contained in Mr Campbell’s declaration, than what is above represented: because as he has not as yet renounced one proposition in all his writings, but defends every one of them; so it is manifest that he pleads,—That in eying God as our last end, we must consider him merely as our chief good; or the being who can fully satisfy our self-love, and gratify all our desires and appetites. And he makes God’s benefits to us, or his promoting our happiness, the only ground and reason of our loving and worshipping him. And he plainly asserts,—That “seeing God acts for his self-interest, we cannot act from a higher principle than our self-interest.” Yea, he confidently affirms,—That “his expressions on this subject do not go higher than his sentiments;” and that “his sentiments do not go beyond the nature of things*.”

A like injury has been done to truth, by the committee’s judging, —“That the expressions objected against, are only too high on the side of self-love: Particularly his asserting self-love to be the sole principle, standard and motive of all religious actions.” And the Assembly’s being of the opinion, “That the committee’s thus stating the matter is a sufficient caution against error,”—has thereby reduced his sentiments (concerning self-love’s being the sole principle, standard and motive of all virtuous and religious actions,) to nothing else but to too high expressions on the side of self-love. And error being, in the nature of the thing, a false proposition or expression: and an high expression, in common language, being nothing else but a truth set in a strong light: hereby the important truths of God, that relate to the principle, standard and motive of our actions, —are left wounded and bleeding in our streets.

2dly, Mr Campbell, in his discourse, proving that the Apostles were no enthusiasts, —has done manifest indignity to the work of the Holy Spirit upon the souls of men, in their regeneration and conversion: In regard he affirms, — That “many in the world look upon these manifestations which they think they have of the nature and excellencies of God, as supernaturally communicated to their minds; and take these inward ravishments they feel upon such pretended revelations, to be all divine joys poured in upon them by the immediate hand of God himself:” and that “it is evident, beyond all reasonable dispute, —that all such events may possibly have come about in a natural course and series of things,” (he makes no exception of any, but such as are of the miraculous and extraordinary kind), “without any more immediate interposing of the Divinity, than there is when a man opens his eyes and beholds the sun in its glory at noon-day*.” He affirms, —That “an extravagant conceit of being peculiarly blest with such supernatural communications from heaven, makes up the very life and soul of enthusiasm†.” He describes the enthusiast to be one “who, in the course of his devotion, keeps not within the compass of reason‡:” whereby he makes human reason, in its present situation,

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*Disc. p. 2.  
†Disc. p. 4.  
‡----- p. 4.
situation, our only guide in our devotion. He also represents the Enthusiast to be one “who, in the course of his devotion, without attending to the dictates of reason,—imagines himself to be under the immediate influences of heaven; and therefore concludes, that these things which run strongly in his mind,—are immediately impressed upon him by the divine Spirit*.” and, in a ludicrous manner, represents it as a part of the character of the Enthusiasts,—That “they consult the throne of grace, lay their matters before the Lord and implore his light and direction.” These and the like (says he) “are terms of art much used by them†.”

But the holy scriptures expressly assert the absolute necessity of a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, for the renovation of our natures; and for manifesting unto us in a saving manner, the glorious excellencies of God in the person of Jesus Christ. This work of the Spirit, is common to all that are effectually called, and they are every one peculiarly blessed with it‡. Also the will of God revealed in his word, and not our own depraved reason,—is that rule, within the compass of which we are to keep in our devotion||. Likewise the scriptures affirm,—That an actual influence of the Holy Spirit is necessary, to enable us to walk with God in all the duties of holy obedience; and to impress the truths of God upon our minds§: and that it is our duty, not to lean to our own understanding, or reason; but to consult the throne of grace,—and to lay all our matters before the Lord, and implore his light and direction¶: And in everything by prayer and supplication, we ought to make our requests known unto God**.

|| Heb. xi. 1, 6. Isa. viii. 20. 2 Pet. i. 19. 1 Sam. xv. 21, 22, 23. Rom. xii. 2.
§ Rom. viii. 9, 14, 26, 27. Phil. ii. 13. 2 Cor. iii. 5. John xvi. 7, 8, 9, 14. John xv. 5.
¶ Prov. iii. 5, 6. Jam. i. 5. Psal. xxxvii. 23. Heb. iv. 14, 15, 16.
** Phil. iv. 6.
It is also the received doctrine laid down in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms,—That a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary for “enlightening our minds, spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God*.” And though “nothing is at any time to be added to the scripture, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men;” yet “the inward illumination of the Spirit of God is necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the word†.” Also, it is the doctrine of our Confession, agreeable to the word of God,—“That the light of nature is not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and of his will which is necessary unto salvation;—which maketh the word of God most necessary, being given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life;” and therefore our corrupt and depraved reason is not the rule and standard of our devotion‡:—And that “good works are only such as God hath commanded in his holy word;” and which “proceed from an heart purified by faith,” and “are done in a right manner according to the word;” and “to a right end, the glory of God;” and “that our works (or duties of obedience) as they are good, proceed from the Holy Spirit;”—that “our ability to do” them “is not at all of ourselves, “but wholly from the Spirit of Christ; and that” we “may be enabled thereunto, besides the graces that” we “have already received, —there is required an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit, to work in” us “to will and to do of his good pleasure;” and “yet” we “are not hereupon to grow negligent, —but to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in” us||.

The General Assembly having had Mr Campbell’s writings under their consideration, it is to be lamented,—that they have entirely overlooked the above, and such other gross propositions in his book concerning enthusiasm;

whereby

*Conf. chap. x. § 1. Larg. Cat. quest. 67.

†Conf. chap. i. § 6.

‡Conf. chap. i. § 1, 2. xvi. § 1. Larg. Cat. quest. 3. Less. Cat. quest. 2.

|| Conf. chap. xvi. § 1, 3, 5, 7. xix. § 7. xxi. § 3, 4.
whereby the supernatural work of the Spirit of God upon the souls of men is reproached, and the serious exercise of godliness is ridiculed.

3dly, Mr Campbell in his writings has likewise asserted,—That “men, without revelation, cannot by their natural powers find out that there is a God.” Which proposition directly contradicts the holy scriptures: in which we are taught,—That the invisible things of God, even his eternal power and Godhead, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that God hath made;—and that these who are without law (i.e. revelation,) have the work of the law written in their hearts, and do by nature the things contained in the law; their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts accusing or excusing one another:—Which could not be, without some knowledge and persuasion of the being of a God; of which they had natural convictions and impressions, as is plain from the words of the Apostle just now mentioned. It is likewise evident from the scriptures,—that God by his works had so clearly manifested his being and existence, his wisdom, power and goodness; that the idolatry of the heathen was thereby rendered a sin against the light of nature: and they were without excuse; because they did not so improve that light, which they had a natural power and ability to do, as to obtain more knowledge and veneration of their Creator and the author of their being,—according to the following scriptures, [Rom. i. 19, 20, 32. with Rom. ii. 12, 14, 15. Psal. xix. 1, 2, 3. Acts xvii. 24, to 27.]

The above proposition likewise overthrows the doctrine laid down in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms; which is as follows: “The very light of nature in man, and the works of God, declare plainly that there is a God; but his word and Spirit only, do sufficiently and effectually reveal him unto men for their salvation;”—that “the light of nature sheweth there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all,—is good, and doth good unto all; and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served,—with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might;”—and that “the light of nature and

“the works of creation and providence, —do so far manifest the
goodness, wisdom, and power of God, —as to leave men
inexcusable*.”

And seeing the committee for purity of doctrine were of
opinion, and that upon good ground, —“That this proposition is
justly exceptionable; as tending to darken and render doubtful
the truth of natural religion, —and as appearing not to agree
with the doctrine of the Apostle Paul, nor with the doctrine of
our Confession of Faith:” There appears no manner of reason
for the Assembly’s dismissing it, as if it were only a doubtful
expression or proposition, which may be construed in an
erroneous sense; however sound it may be in itself, or however
well intended. By which conduct of the Assembly, the cause of
truth hath suffered exceedingly; in regard that, by the above
proposition, the first principles of natural religion are attacked
and subverted.

4thly, Further, Mr Campbell in his writings has asserted,
—That “the laws of nature, in themselves, are a certain and
sufficient rule to direct rational minds to happiness;” and that
“our observing of these laws, is the great mean and instrument
of our real and lasting felicity†.” Which propositions do
evidently contradict the holy scriptures: In which we are taught,
—That the word of God is the only rule of faith and obedience;
and that men cannot be accepted in God’s sight, nor be intitled
to future and lasting felicity, by framing their lives according to
the law of nature. And though holiness be absolutely necessary
to make us meet for communion with God, —both in grace
here, and in glory hereafter; yet the righteousness of Christ,
or his obedience and satisfaction, imputed to us, and received and
rested upon by faith of the operation of God, —is the great
mean of our blessedness and happiness begun in time, and
consummate in heaven‡.

And

*Conf. chap. xxi. § 1. i. § 1. Larg. Cat. quest. 2.

†Disc. Pref. p. 5, 6.

‡Gal. iii. 21, 22 and vi. 16. Rom. viii. 3. and iii. 20, 21. Isa. xlii. 6.
xvii. 3. John iv. 22. 1 Cor. xvi. 22. Gal. i. 6, 7, 8. John iii. 36. Acts x.
43 and xvi. 31. Rom. iii. 22, to 28. and v. 6, 7, 8. 2 Cor. v. 19, 21. Eph.
i. 7. Phil. iii. 7, 8, 9.
And the above propositions manifestly subvert the doctrine laid down in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, \textit{viz.} That “man by his fall having made himself incapable of life by the covenant of works; the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace:” that “men not professing the Christian religion—cannot be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature:” and that those “whom God effectually calleth, he freely justifieth; not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them,—but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift of God*.”

A very considerable injury has been done to the truths of God, by the committee’s making the above propositions no other but \textit{unguarded expressions}; and by the Assembly’s giving it as their opinion,—“that the committee had so stated the matter, as is sufficient for cautioning against the errors that some at first supposed Mr Campbell was guilty of;”—and their dismissing the said propositions, which were under their consideration, as is done in the close of their act; as if they were only \textit{doubtful expressions}, or propositions which may be construed in an erroneous sense,—however sound they may be in themselves, or however well intended:—And this, notwithstanding it is most manifest from the expressions themselves, and connection of purposes in the preface to his discourse (in which he delivers these propositions),—and from the relation they stand in to the principles of the Deists which he there proposes to refute; that he must be understood to speak of mankind in their present situation: And that he there, and in the very next page to that in which he lays down the above-mentioned propositions, expressly pleads for the necessity or fitness of revelation,—only to give a sufficient information of the laws of nature, in their full compass and latitude; and of all things necessary to work upon the passions of men, and to engage them to pursue and observe them: And that in his Enquiry (page 221.) he asserts,—

\*Conf. chap. vii. § 3. x. § 4. xi. § 1. Larg. Cat. quest. 60, 73.
that “the sentiments of all fair and honest enquirers do certainly agree, in all important points of religion that are of common concern; to which the common parent of mankind has proportioned the common understanding of human nature.” And that he has not yet confessed one blunder or impertinence, in the way he has taken of managing the arguments against the Deists,—or the concessions he has made them; or retracted any one of his propositions or expressions, but defends them all most keenly: And that any declarations he has made, from which the Assembly or committee would infer,—that it is not his meaning that a supernatural revelation of a Saviour and faith in him are superfluous, and not necessary to the happiness of fallen man, (as to which heretics have been abundantly liberal, and with the greatest cunning and artifice,—on occasion of warping in their own errors, or screening themselves from danger,)—must necessarily be understood in an agreeableness to, and consistency with all these other unsound propositions to which he tenaciously adheres. From all which it is very manifest, that these propositions, as they are laid in his writings, and were under the Assembly’s consideration,—are most dangerous, unsound, and erroneous: And that the Assembly, by their conduct in this matter,—have given a deep wound to the cause of truth, which cannot enough be regreted and lamented.

5thly. Further, Mr Campbell in his writings has asserted,—That “the Apostles do not seem to have had any notion of our Saviour’s divinity, at the time of his crucifixion:” And that “they did not apprehend him under that character in which he is represented to us by the Apostle John, in the first chapter of his gospel,—and by Paul in his epistles; before they began their public ministry*:”—That the Apostles, being “violently prepossessed in favour of a worldly kingdom,” looked upon the carrying it on as the only end of the Messiah’s coming to the world; and “expected this, and this only from him†:”—And that the Apostles, in the interval betwixt Christ’s death and resurrection, “were greatly offended at him in their hearts; as being, in their opinion, a downright cheat and deceiver,—who had once flattered

“them

“them with mighty hopes, but now had left them under all the agonies of shame and disappointment:” And, that “they all looked upon him as an impostor*."

All the above propositions do directly contradict the holy scriptures; in which it is expressly affirmed,—That the disciples and followers of Christ beheld him in the glory of his divine person; they beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,—and that even while he dwelt among them, in the days of his humiliation: That they looked upon him to be the Messiah, the Son of the living God; a discovery which flesh and blood (that is, human reason) had not made to them, but the Father: That they expected heaven and eternal life from him: That religious worship was claimed by him, and paid to him, while he tabernacled among them: That all the disciples declared their faith of his Omniscience: and that one of them, in presence of all the rest, before they entered on their public ministry,—professed his faith in him as his Lord and his God. And therefore it is most false and grossly erroneous to say,—“That the Apostles had no notion of our Lord’s divinity, before they began their public ministry; and that they expected nothing from him but a temporal deliverance†.” And the scriptures likewise assert,—That our Lord Jesus Christ had manifested his Father’s name to his disciples; that is, all the purposes of his grace, as centring in himself the Mediator: That they had received his words, and knew thereby that he came out from the Father, and believed that the Father had sent him‡: And that they considered their Lord as the Messiah, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write||: And that they looked upon him, in the very interval betwixt his death and resurrection,—to be a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people§. And also, that the faith of none of them, no not of Peter, did fail¶. And therefore it is most false and grossly errone-

*Preface to Disc. p. 21, 23.
¶Luke xxii. 32.
ous to say,—that the apostles, in the interval betwixt Christ’s death and resurrection, looked upon their Lord and Master as a downright cheat and impostor.

The above propositions are likewise contrary to the doctrine laid down in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, viz. That “the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,—are the One only, living, true and eternal God; the same in substance, equal in power and glory*.” That “Christ the Mediator is very God and very man, of one substance, and equal with the Father;” and that “the benefits of his redemption were communicated unto the elect in all ages from the beginning of the World,—in and by these promises, types, and sacrifices wherein he was revealed†.” That “they whom God hath effectually called, can never totally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end‡.” And that, though “the Catholic Church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less visible;” yet “there shall be always a Church on earth, to worship God according to his will||.”

The cause of truth hath suffered exceedingly, and received a deep wound; from the Assembly’s giving it as their opinion,—That the above sentiments vented by Mr Campbell, “contain only his conjectural opinion concerning the inward sentiments of other men; and that our Confession and Catechisms teach nothing concerning these matters;” As also, that his design was,—“to give the greater strength to his argument, for vindicating the Apostles from enthusiasm;”—And their dismissing these gross and erroneous propositions as doubtful expressions only, which may be construed in an erroneous sense; however sound they may be in themselves, and however well intended.

This their conduct cannot be enough lamented, if it is considered,—that the above propositions are hereby purged of all manner of falsehood or unsoundness in themselves; seeing what is false in itself, can give no strength to an argument: Nor can it be the least excuse for a man’s ven-

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* Conf. chap. ii. § 1, 3. Larg. Cat. quest. 9.
† Conf. chap. viii. § 2.6. ‡ Conf. chap. xvii. § 1.
|| Conf. chap. xxv. § 4, 5.
ting unsound propositions, that he designed by them to give strength to his argument. That these propositions contradict the holy scriptures, has been shown in the above passages that have been cited; and this is enough to determine them to be unsound and erroneous. But, if the strain and general design of the scriptures is considered, they may be said to contradict the whole word of God; as well as every chapter of our Confession of Faith. For it is a thing most certain, that if the apostles of Christ, (who constantly attended his ministry,—of whom the greatest things are said of all others, as to their proficiency by their instruction*; and to whom he expounded all things privately, that he spoke openly in parables);—if these however had no notion of his divinity, and expected nothing but a temporal deliverance from him,—and, in the interval betwixt his death and resurrection, looked upon him as a cheat and impostor; no better opinion can be justly maintained of any then living.—And it may be given up to Mr Campbell, That one may be a true believer (for such were all his disciples except Judas) who doth not yet believe the divinity of the Son of God; and consequently, that the Church may be constitute of a company of infidels under a christian name;—which is very agreeable to the Socinian and Deistical schemes: It may be likewise given up to him,—That one may have a true and saving faith, as the disciples certainly had; and yet fall totally away from the same, into the grossest infidelity;—for grosser cannot be imagined, than that all the disciples should look upon their Lord as a downright cheat and impostor:—Both which are contrary to the above passages of the Confession, and the scriptures these articles are founded upon. And from Mr Campbell’s above principles it follows,—that [John i.14.], and all the other declarations and confessions that the Apostles in the days of his humiliation made,—concerning their faith of his true, proper, and supreme Deity; are nothing to the purpose: and that no argument can be drawn for the same, from any such declarations and confessions that are recorded in the four gospels.

All

*John xvii. 6, 7, 8.
All the above-mentioned are some of the many dangerous expressions and propositions, that ly scattered through Mr Campbell’s writings. And this Presbytery taking into their serious consideration,—the dishonour that is done to God, the injury that is done to his truths, by all the foresaid propositions; and also considering, that many may be in danger of being tainted with the same, in this day of general apostasy and defection from the truths of God: Therefore, and for all the several grounds and reasons above condescended upon,—They did, and hereby do CONDEMN all and every one of the foresaid propositions maintained and defended by the said Mr Campbell; as contrary to the word of God, our Confession of Faith and Catechisms:—particularly his affirming, That “the sole and universal motive to virtuous actions is self-love, interest or pleasure:” That “self-love is the great cause, or the first spring of all our several actions and motions; which way soever they may be directed:” and that “it is universally the first spring in every rational mind, that awakens her powers; begins her motions, and carries her on to action:”—whereby the vitals of practical religion are attacked and undermined. Also, his asserting,—That self-love is the only standard, measure and rule of all virtue and religion; and of all our several actions and motions, which way soever they may happen to be directed;—and, That “self-interest or pleasure is the only standard by which we can judge of the virtue, (i.e. the value and goodness) of any action whatsoever:” That “moral virtue flows from the essential properties and nature of things:” That “God’s interests are not in all respects independent on us;” That “our happiness is advantageous to God’s nature;” and, That “self-love determines God to be studious of our good:” and, That “he cannot but reward the virtuous from self-love.” By all which the authority of God, the great lawgiver, is disparaged: His self-sufficiency is
is blasphemously impugned; and he is made a debtor to his creatures, being necessarily obliged to reward their service and obedience.—Likewise his representing as Enthusiasts, all who pretend to have obtained supernatural manifestations of the nature and excellencies of God, that are not of the extraordinary and miraculous kind; and “who imagine themselves, in the course of their devotion, to be under the influences of heaven;”—and that “consulting the throne of grace, laying all our matters before the Lord, and imploring his light and direction,—are terms of art much used by Enthusiasts.” By all which the work of the Holy Spirit on the souls of men in effectual calling, and the spiritual exercises of all such as are exercised to godliness,—are reviled, traduced, and reproached. Also his affirming,—That “men cannot by their natural powers, without the aid of revelation, find out that there is a God:” Whereby the first principles of natural religion are wickedly attacked. Likewise his affirming,—That “our observing of the laws of nature, is the great mean or instrument of our real and lasting felicity;” and that “the laws of nature in themselves are a certain and sufficient rule to direct rational minds to happiness;—however revelation be fit or necessary, to give sufficient information of the laws of nature in their full compass and latitude; and of all things necessary to work upon the passions of men, to engage them to pursue and observe them:” Whereby the peculiar truths of the gospel, concerning the person and mediation of Christ and the whole work of the Spirit, are wickedly subverted; and such a sufficiency is ascribed to natural religion, as gives up the cause of truth to Deists and Socinians. And likewise his affirming,—That the Apostles of our Lord, before his resurrection, knew not his divinity: and that they expected nothing from the Messiah but a worldly kingdom or a temporal deliverance; and that, in the interval betwixt his death and resurrection, they looked upon him as a cheat and impostor:—Whereby the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is subtilly undermined; and the arguments drawn for the Deity of the Son of God, from the declarations and confessions made by the disciples
in the days of his humiliation, are wholly enervate. And the
Presbytery did, and hereby do declare,—That all the
above propositions, tenets and principles, maintained and
defended by Mr Campbell,—are contrary, as said is, to
the word of God and our Confession of Faith and
Catechisms: And that they are gross, dangerous, and
pernicious errors.

And in regard that the late General Assembly have neither
censured the broacher and venter of the above dangerous errors,
nor condemned any one of them; but have dismissed the process
against him, by declaring,—“That the examining and stating of
the matter, as was done by the committee for purity of doctrine,
is sufficient for cautioning against the errors that some at first
supposed Mr Campbell was guilty of;” without giving any
formal judgment or sentence upon the said committee’s report:
And in regard the committee in their said report, and the
Assembly in their act and sentence,—declared that they are satisfied,
Mr Campbell has a sound meaning, in the several
propositions they had under their consideration;—and
particularly, that they are satisfied with the explication he gave
of the article concerning self-love; namely, “That he meaned no
more, but that our delight in the glory and honour of God was
the chief motive of all virtuous and religious actions;” And this
proposition, now adopted by the Assembly, being the very same
with Mr Campbell’s above condemned principle; “that self-love
is the great cause or the first spring of all our several motions
and actions, which way soever they are directed;” Therefore
this Presbytery did, and hereby do declare, for the
grounds and reasons above condescended upon,—That
the foresaid proposition, adopted by the Assembly, is a
gross and dangerous error. And this Presbytery likewise
considering,—That it is the duty of the judicatories of the
church to proceed in a regular course of process, and in the due
exercise of discipline, against erroneous and heretical seducers;
according to the rule and direction

given
given by the Apostle, *An heretic after the first and second admonition reject:* And in regard the Assemblies of this Church have never put a libel into the said Mr Campbell’s hands, in order to reclaim him from the gross and dangerous errors he has fallen into; or for rejecting and casting him out, if found obstinately adhering to his dangerous principles and tenets: Therefore they did, and hereby do declare, That the whole conduct of the last Assembly, in dismissing this affair in the manner above narrated,—is a deep wound given to truth, and a lamentable step of defection; and may be justly reckoned amongst the signs, grounds, and causes of the Lord’s indignation against this whole Church and land.

**Article IV. Another attack upon Scripture-doctrine.**

**III.** The Scripture doctrine of this and all the reformed Churches is subtilly undermined, and wickedly subverted,—in a print lately published, under the title of *The Assembly’s Shorter Catechism revised and rendered fitter for general use:* In regard the Reviser, by the several omissions, alterations and additions he has thought fit to make in the Assembly’s Catechism,—not only shakes the pillars of our reformation from Popery; with respect to the scriptures, as the only rule of faith and practice,—and the doctrines concerning justification, the sacrament of our Lord’s supper, and the just desert of every sin;—but also boldly strikes at the whole scheme of divine revelation, contained in the said Catechism; by casting the same into such a shape and mould as is very agreeable to the Deistical, Arian, Socinian and Arminian schemes. Hence the doctrines taught in the Assembly’s Catechism, concerning the holy scriptures being the *only* rule of faith and practice; concerning the holy Trinity, and the decrees of God; concerning the covenants of works and grace; together with original sin, and its effects upon mankind,—and the evil nature and desert of all sin, as contrary to the authority and holiness of God: also the doctrines concerning...
the person of Christ,—his two distinct natures, and their personal union; concerning the nature, end and design of his sufferings,—as a real and proper satisfaction to the justice of God; concerning special grace,—and the peculiar and supernatural energy of the Holy Spirit in the application of the purchased redemption, in our conversion and effectual calling: likewise the doctrines concerning the perseverance of the saints, and the perpetual obligation of the whole moral law;—

(especially when the obligation to obedience is not derived by the Reviser from the authority of God as he is JEHovah, whose perfections are infinite and whose dominion is over all; but only from the special and peculiar benefits received from him): Together with the doctrine contained in the Catechism, concerning the regard that Christians should pay to the first day of the week as our Christian Sabbath:—All these scripture doctrines concerning the above particular heads, as they are plainly laid down in the Catechism, are subtilly and wickedly subverted by the Reviser.

This PRESBYTERY would not have taken such particular notice of the foresaid Catechism revised; were it not that the scheme of doctrine delivered in it is not only adapted, but very agreeable to the corrupt and depraved taste of the present age. And they cannot but observe it with regret, that revealed religion is so much despised by many; and that the holy scriptures are little regarded, and the law of nature cried up as sufficient to direct men to true felicity and blessedness: And the supernatural operation of the Spirit, and his peculiar energy in the conversion of sinners,—are burlesqued. And many who profess some regard to revealed religion, according to the Reviser’s scheme,—despise the necessity, truth, and excellency of the satisfaction of Christ; and the necessity of the imputation of his righteousness for our justification in the sight of God: Together with the absolute need there is of the renovation of our natures by supernatural grace, and of a vital union with Christ; in order to the bringing forth the fruits of holiness,—in heart, life, and conversation. Yea these, and the like doctrines, appear to be nauseous to not a few,—whose character and profession obliges them to publish and recommend them: When instead of the special and peculiar
peculiar doctrines of the gospel, (that concern the person, offices, and mediation of Christ,—salvation by the free grace of God, and the supernatural energy of his Spirit); mens sincere endeavours are, according to the Reviser’s scheme, cried up,—either as concurring with the Spirit of God in regeneration and effectual calling, or as pre-existent conditions unto the application of the purchased redemption;—and the holy Spirit of God is only regarded as an assistant and help unto us, in these our sincere endeavours. Faith, repentance, and what they call sincere obedience,—are preached, as the ground of our right and title to life and happiness: And, instead of enforcing duties of obedience to the law from gospel principles and motives, a scheme of morality is taught which has self-interest for its principal and leading motive; and that has little or no respect to Christ, as its author and ground of acceptance,—or to the glory of God as its end.

Article V. The negligence of the General Assemblies concerning Error.

IV. Although the above dangerous and pernicious errors have been broached, and are spreading through this Church and land: Yet the standard of a plain and faithful Testimony has not, to this day, been lifted up against them; for the honour of Christ, and the vindication of his injured truth. This sinful negligence and omission of the judicatories of this Church, in a matter of such importance, (wherein the honour of God, the glory of the Redeemer, the maintainance and preservation of the purity of doctrine,—and consequently, not only the souls of the present, but also of the rising generation, are all so deeply concerned); may be reckoned one of the most grievous and weighty grounds and causes of the Lord’s indignation and wrath, against this whole Church and land.

As for instance, when reports were spread at first concerning Mr John Simson his teaching and venting error; the late reverend and worthy Mr James Webster, having taken notice of the same in the presbytery and synod whereof he was a member, and they refusing to give their concurrence therein,—he tabled the affair before the General Assembly 1714, desiring them to take trial thereof as their proper province,
province. But the said Assembly were so far from assisting him in this matter, that they appointed the said Mr James Webster, or any who will join with him in charging Mr John Simson professor of divinity at Glasgow with error, - to table their complaint before the presbytery where he lives: Allowing any person or persons who are willing, to give Mr Webster assistance in point of form; but declaring that, if they engage with him in that cause, they shall be accounted libelers*.

Accordingly, Mr Webster having libeled Mr Simson before the presbytery of Glasgow, and the said Mr Simson having given in his subscribed answers and defences; wherein are contained the above mentioned dangerous and erroneous propositions: The process was brought before the Assembly 1715, who appointed a committee to take trial of the case; continuing the load and weight of the prosecution upon Mr Webster, as the party pursuing and accusing. In like manner the Assembly 1716 continued the process in the same channel, till it was concluded by the Assembly 1717: Who, instead of condemning particularly the gross and dangerous errors owned by Mr Simson, and inflicting due censure upon him; did not so much as rebuke him for venting the same:—Although they were so far convinced of the truth of the libel against him, that by their act they find,—“That he had vented some opinions not necessary to be taught in divinity, and that had given more occasion to strife than to the promoting of edification; and that he had used some expressions that bear, and are used by adversaries in an unsound sense;—and that he had adopted some hypotheses, different from what are commonly used among orthodox divines, that are not evidently founded on scripture,—and tend to attribute too much to natural reason and the power of corrupt nature; which undue advancement of reason and nature, is always to the disparagement of Revelation and efficacious free grace: Therefore they prohibit and discharge the said Mr Simson to use such expressions; or to teach, preach or otherwise vent such opinions, propositions or hypotheses as aforesaid.”

This

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*See Index of unprinted acts of Assembly 1714.
This extensive lenity, or rather sinful remissness and slackness,—in not inflicting due censure upon one who had given such evident discoveries of his corrupt and erroneous principles, and whom it was unsafe to trust any more with the education of youth for the holy ministry,—encouraged him to go on in venting and teaching his pernicious errors; till at length, in a way of righteous judgment from the Lord on this sinful and lukewarm Church,—he is so far left of God, as to attack and impugn the Supreme Deity of the great God our Saviour. And though it was found clearly proven by the several Assemblies who had this process under their consideration, That he had vented and taught the above-mentioned propositions; whereby he attempted to divest the Son of God of his true and Supreme Deity, and thereby blasphemed that name which is above every name: Yet the concern of this Church for this foundation-truth, did rise no higher than a bare suspension of the blasphemer from teaching or preaching,—and the exercise of any ecclesiastical power and function; leaving the door open, to another Assembly to relax him from the said sentence.

In like manner, during the dependence of the foresaid process, the Committee of Assembly found it clearly proven,—that he had contraveened the injunction of Assembly 1717, in venting the dangerous errors which they had discharged him to teach: Yet the Assembly 1729 concluded the process against him, without taking any notice of these gross errors. And though there is just ground to fear that too many are tainted with them, whereby the purity of doctrine is in the greatest danger; yet no regard is had to these things, but all is passed over by our Assemblies since that time with a profound silence: Except what was done by the Assembly 1736, in their act concerning preaching; wherein several weighty and important truths are asserted,—and several necessary and seasonable directions are given, both to Ministers and Preachers. Yet the many gross and dangerous errors, vented and taught by Mr Simson, are never particularly condemned; neither is there any plain and faithful warning emitted against them. Also, the foresaid Assembly, in dismissing Mr
Mr Campbell's affair by an after act, in the manner that is already observed,—have so far enervate and weakned their own act about preaching; that the good effects thereof, which otherwise might have been hoped for, cannot be now expected.

The above omission of our General Assemblies concerning doctrine, must be reckoned the more culpable,—in regard they have been frequently addressed, by representations and instructions from synods and presbyteries, (and also from Ministers and Elders, and people through the land); representing the necessity of a particular condemnation of the several dangerous errors and blasphemies vented by Mr Simson,—and that a solemn warning might be emitted, discovering the evil and dangerous tendency of the same: Yet nothing of this kind is done. And though it be a debt which one generation owes to another, to transmit the truths of God in their purity to posterity; and to deliver off their hand to the rising generation, these truths that are particularly assaulted and opposed,—with some more peculiar and solemn testimony unto them: Yet injured truth continues to ly wounded and bleeding in our streets, without justice done her by the Church representative: To whom it belongs in a special manner to publish and declare, to uphold and defend all the truths of God delivered in his word; against open and avowed enemies, or secret underminers of the same. And therefore the above sinful omission must needs be reckoned an injury done to truth; an injustice done to our posterity: And of a very dangerous tendency towards the hardening of such as may be tainted with the above errors, as well as opening a door for the spreading of this corrupt leaven among others.

Article VI. Other public Evils, since the Accession of GEORGE I.

V. Besides the above-mentioned pernicious errors, which like a flood have overspread this Church,—particularly since our deliverance from the late unnatural and wicked rebellion; and which were never the sin nor
trial of the Church of Scotland, in any of our former periods of apostasy and defection;—our declinings and back-slidings have increased since that time, by the several dangerous thrusts and wounds we have given with our own hands to our presbyterian church-government and discipline; whereby our ruin and destruction, if mercy prevent not, is like to proceed from ourselves: Of which the following particular instances are offered.

1. No due caution and care has been taken in licensing young men, as probationers for the holy ministry; nor a suitable regard had to the qualifications, required in the scriptures and acts of our General Assemblies,—of such as are to be employed in preaching the gospel. Hence it is come to pass that many have been licensed, who, by their general and loose harangues in the pulpit, discover their ignorance of Christ and him crucified; and their estrangement from the power of godliness: while there is as little of Christ to be found in their sermons, as in the systems of heathen morals.

2. The corrupt and undue entry of many into the holy ministry, is another of the public sins and epidemic evils of the present time. The acceptance of presentations has become fashionable, for several years bypast; and, instead of giving a check to this corrupt course and practice, the judicatories of the Church have so far encouraged the same,—that the settlement of presentees has been appointed, when almost the whole parish was dissenting and reclaiming;—contrary to the word of God, and the laudable acts and constitutions of this Church founded thereon: Yea, settlements have been appointed in a very arbitrary manner over dissenting congregations, even when there was no presentation in the case. And when presbyteries concerned have refused to proceed to such violent settlements, committees have been appointed by the commission; and invested with a presbyterial power, to try and ordain men to the holy ministry. And likewise, many congregations through the land are still groaning under the weight of such arbitrary and violent intrusions: And neither the intruded, nor such as have had an active hand in the intrusion,—give any evidence to this day of their repentance

and
and sorrow for the violence they have done to the flock and heritage of God, who are thereby scattered and broken.

3. The conduct of the General Assemblies of the Church has not been equal and *impartial* in matters of doctrine: As for instance, in the case of Mr *John Simson*. The processes carried on against him were kept several years in dependance before the judicatories. And particularly the last process, which concerned his impugning the *Supreme Deity* of the *Son of God*,—was transmitted to the several presbyteries of this Church by the Assembly 1728; that their judgment might be reported to the ensuing Assembly, about the censure that was due to the said Mr *Simson*: Though the evidence was so clear, that the discipline of the Church should have been summarily exercised upon him.—But the General Assembly 1720, condemned a bundle of propositions containing important matters of doctrine; when the affair had been under the consideration only of two different meetings of that Assembly, and a committee of the whole house.

This very sudden step of the said Assembly occasioned a *representation* to be given in to the Assembly 1721, by several Ministers of this Church; bearing,—That it appeared to them, that many gospel truths were wounded by the foresaid condemnatory act and sentence: And the Assembly 1722—saw themselves obliged to explain and declare their minds at length, concerning these important doctrines then upon the field; in the terms and expressions used in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms. But still a wound was given to truth, by the act of the foresaid Assembly 1720 relating to doctrine: Particularly by their condemning as erroneous the two following propositions,—“That, as the law is the covenant of works, believers are wholly and altogether set free from it;” and, “That believers are set free, both from the commanding and condemning power of the covenant of works.” Though both these propositions are evident from the word of God, and expressly contained in our Confession of Faith*; yet the said Assembly thought fit summarily to condemn them. As this sudden and precipitant stroke, at that spi-

ritual freedom and liberty wherewith the Son of God hath made his people free,—could not but be affecting to many Ministers and Christians through the land, as well as to the foresaid Ministers; so the Assembly 1722 found themselves obliged to declare,—“That it is a precious gospel truth, That believers are free from the law as it is a covenant of works;” Yet it is matter of regret, that the credit of acts of Assembly is so much stood upon,—that the Assembly 1722 did not repeal that act and deed of the Assembly 1720; whereby, what they themselves owned to be a precious truth, is in express terms condemned.

4. Several arbitrary acts and decisions have been framed and passed by the General Assemblies of this Church; whereby the government of the house of God has been undermined, and the discipline sinfully perverted: Such as the act of Assembly 1732, concerning the planting of vacant Churches; which lodges the decisive power of electing Ministers in a conjunct meeting of elders and heritors,—no other qualification being required of the said heritors but their being Protestants, however much disaffected to the government both in Church and State. Again, the Assembly 1733 rebuked and admonished Mr Erskine at their bar,—for impugning several acts of Assemblies and proceedings of church-judicatories, in his sermon at the opening of the synod of Perth and Stirling; that is, for testifying against the act of Assembly 1732, and other violent proceedings of judicatories at that time. And when he, with other three Ministers, protested against the said sentence for their own just and necessary exoneration; high censures were threatened, and actually inflicted upon them; because they had not freedom to retract their protestation, and profess their sorrow for the same,—as required by the said Assembly: Whereby two sinful and unwarrantable terms of ministerial communion were imposed:—First, That no Minister of this Church should testify from the pulpit, against acts of Assembly and proceedings of Church-judicatories; even though they were such as had a direct tendency to undermine our constitution: Secondly, That no Minister or Member of this Church should PROTEST, for their own exoneration, against acts, sentences or decisions of the supreme judicatory; even though they should nearly affect
affect the public cause of God, and restrain ministerial freedom and faithfulness (as was the present case) in testifying against the sins and defections of a backsliding Church.

Further, the said Assembly, by another act,—discharging the Ministers of the presbytery of Dunfermline, under pain of the highest censure, to admit any of the parish of Kinross to sealing-ordinances without the permission of the present incumbent, who was intruded upon them,—imposed another sinful term of ministerial communion upon the Ministers of this Church; whereby they are bound up from dispensing sealing-ordinances, under pain of the highest censure, to such of the Lord’s people as have not freedom to submit to the ministry of intruders: And thereby likewise imposed a new and unwarrantable term of Christian communion; when all such as cannot own intruders to be their lawful pastors, are actually excommunicated from sealing-ordinances;—which is a plain homologating of a piece of tyranny which was exercised in the former persecuting period; this being one of the grounds of peoples withdrawing from Prelatic incumbents, that they were intruded upon them without their call or consent.

5. Tho’ the Assembly 1734 did repeal the act of Assembly 1732 anent the settlement of Ministers; yet the said act was not condemned as contrary to the word of God: And the constitutions of this Church, contained in her books of discipline and acts of former Assemblies; particularly act of Assembly at Glasgow 1638,—“discharging any person to be intruded in any office of the kirk, contrary to the will of the congregation to which they are appointed.” And though some stop was put by the foresaid Assembly, to the violent measures and proceedings of some former Assemblies and their commissions: Yet the act of Assembly 1733, (restraining ministerial freedom and faithfulness, and censuring the Ministers and members of this Church—for protesting for their own exoneration against such decisions of the General Assembly as are prejudicial to the cause and interest of Christ in this land), stands to this day unrepealed; as also the act of the same Assembly
Assembly with reference to the presbytery of Dunfermline,—excommunicating both Minister and members of this Church, in case they do not either concur with or submit to the ministry of intruders. Nor is it any apology for a sinful act or decision, whereby a Church is involved in the guilt of transgressing the ordinances and institutions of the Lord,—that there is a connivance at the contrary practice.

6. All the above-mentioned steps of defection and apostasy, are followed with many evident signs and causes of the Lord’s departure: such as abounding profanity, impiety, and the vilest immoralities of all sorts,—wherewith the land is greatly polluted: The profane diversions of the stage, together with night assemblies and balls, these sinful occasions of wantonness and prodigality,—are encouraged and countenanced in the most considerable cities of the nation.—Likewise an idolatrous picture of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, was well received in some remarkable places of the land*. And though popish errors and delusions abound more and more, and the abominable idolatry of the mass is openly frequented in many corners of this land; yet no proper nor effectual remedies are applied against this growing evil: And particularly, church discipline is not duly exercised against Papists; according to former laudable acts and constitutions of this Church. And of late, the penal statutes against witches have been repealed; contrary to the express letter of the law of God, Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live†:—There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire; or that useth divination, or a server of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer: For all that do these are an abomination to the Lord: and because of these abominations, the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee‡.

Also,

*This was a large Crucifix, or a pretended fine Picture of our Lord upon the Cross; which had been very lately carried about by a Romish Missionary for a show.

†Exod. xxii. 18.  ‡Deut. xviii, 10, 11, 12.
Also, the common impressions of God are in a great measure worn off the spirits of men; the power of religion is daily decaying through the land. The very form of it is despised by many, and rested upon by others; which is occasioned by the general contempt of the gospel,—and neglecting the great salvation, brought near therein to sinners of all sorts: upon which account the Lord is provoked to withdraw, in a great measure, from his own ordinances,—and to restrain the gracious influences of his Holy Spirit; whereby multitudes, under the means of grace, are lying scattered like dry bones about the grave’s mouth:—A sad evidence of the departure of a Spirit of prayer; and of mourning for our own sins, and the abominations that are done in the midst of us: Especially when it is considered,—that a dreadful spirit of security, deadness and indifferency prevails among all ranks of persons; notwithstanding of the many evident symptoms of the Lord’s anger and displeasure gone forth against us.

Our Nobility and Barons, who have sometimes appeared with an heroic zeal and resolution for maintaining and advancing a work of reformation,—have generally burst the Lord’s bands asunder, and have cast his cords from them; in so much, that the very form of family-worship is either despised or neglected by the most part of them. Our burgesses and commons, who have made a zealous profession of the truths of the gospel,—for the most part know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God. The Ministers of the House of God, who have sometimes set the trumpet to their mouth, and shown to the House of Jacob their sin and their transgression,—are under a more than an ordinary restraint of the Spirit of God; and he that speaks against the evils of this degenerate day, makes himself a prey. Every one of us, in many, if not in all the above particular instances,—are some way or other deeply involved in the provocation: The sun is gone down upon us, we do not behold our signs; and there is not a prophet, nor any that knows the time how long.

It may be mentioned with regret, that in the two several acts for national fasting, appointed by the late commissions,—there is no particular searching into the grounds and
and causes of the Lord’s indignation and controversy against this Church and land, in former and present times: There is no mention made of the ruining acts and constitutions above named; nor of the sinful silence of judicatories, in omitting a faithful testimony against the growing and spreading errors of the times; nor of the injuries done to the heritage and flock of God, by the violent intrusions that have been made upon them,—which have raised a cry of violence and oppression from all corners of the land. A cry is gone up to heaven, even to his ears who hath said,—*For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him*. When the sins of the present times are not particularly mourned over; it cannot be expected that there will be any faithful enquiry into, or acknowledgment of the defections and backslidings of former periods: For which we have just ground to apprehend,—that the Lord may pursue a quarrel and controversy against *sinful, gospel-despising and covenant-breaking* Scotland. Yea, instead of acknowledging the sins and defections of the present times; those who have had an active hand in them, continue to justify their abominations: And, by the whole of their conduct and behaviour, declare,—That they only want an opportunity to re-act the same scene of oppression and tyranny; and to compleat what they had begun, and in a great measure carried on,—even the ruin of any remains of a covenanted-reformation among us. Yea, such of the ministry as are weighted and grieved with the above and the like backslidings and declinings,—have not that courage and resolution to appear in the present judicatories, which the providences and circumstances of the day and time call for.

Hence, notwithstanding of the stop that was put to former violent proceedings by the Assembly 1734; yet, instead of carrying on reformation,—a visible fainting and declining seems to take place in the present judicatories of the Church, of which many instances might be given: Such as, their proceeding no further than the sentence of the *lesser excommunication* against one Mr Nimmo, student

*Psal. xii. 5.*
in Divinity; who (in March 1735, in a public discourse in the Divinity hall of Edinburgh) made an insolent and blasphemous attack upon the whole of divine revelation;—when no less censure than that of the higher excommunication, summarily pronounced, could have been justly reckoned a sufficient testimony against such bold and daring wickedness; which, in all its circumstances, had never its parallel in this land. Likewise, the Assembly that met foresaid year—appointed a call to be moderate for the presentee to the parish of Carriden; exclusive of any other. And the synod of Perth and Stirling,—upon the remit of the affair made by the same Assembly unto them, concerning the inrolment of the intruder into the parish of Muckhart; instead of censuring him for his scandalous intrusion, have taken him into their bosom,—and given him the right hand of fellowship, by inrolling him as one of their number: Though he was never inrolled by the presbytery, who have the more immediate inspection of that parish; and though they reclaimed against the inrolment, and several of them dissented from that deed of the synod.

And though the Assembly 1736 in their 14th act declare,—“that it is and has been since the Reformation, the principle of this Church; that no Minister shall be intruded into any parish contrary to the will of the congregation;” Yet, in contradiction thereunto,—they themselves appointed the presbytery of Stirling to proceed to the settlement of a presentee to the parish of Denny; though the whole elders, and the body of the people, are dissenting and reclaiming. And likewise, they appointed the synod and presbytery of Dumfries to inroll the intruder into the parish of Troqueir,—“as a member of the respective judicatories; to support him in his ministry, and to endeavour to bring the people of that parish to submit to it.” These are sad evidences, that instead of being duly affected with our backsliding and defection,—we sigh and go backward; yea, we refuse to return.

The above-mentioned particulars, are some instances of the gradual declinings and backslidings of this Church and land.
land (besides the doctrinal errors already condemned); most of which have taken place betwixt the late unnatural Rebellion and this present time: And which this presbytery judge it their duty to testify against. Therefore, and for all the reasons and grounds above particularly condescended upon, they did and hereby do Condemn, as contrary to the word of God and the covenanted principles of this Church,—all and every one of the steps of defection above narrated: And they did and hereby do declare, that they are amongst the causes and grounds of the Lord’s righteous quarrel and controversy with this whole Church and land; for which all ranks of persons have reason to humble themselves, before a righteous and holy God.

CHAP. III. The asserting Part of the Testimony.

But in regard it is necessary for the maintenance and vindication of truth, not only to condemn the particular steps of declining and backsliding which a Church and Land may be guilty of; but also to publish, declare and assert the truths which are controverted, opposed or assaulted,—whether they concern the doctrine, worship, government, or discipline of the house of God: And particularly considering the bold attempts that have been made upon the whole doctrine of this Church, contained in the holy scriptures and her Confession of Faith founded thereupon,—by the foresaid Mr Simson and Mr Campbell; and by the foresaid print, intitled, The Assembly’s Catechism revised:—Therefore the Ministers associate in presbytery do judge it a duty necessarily incumbent on them, in the situation wherein adorable providence has placed them as a judicatory, and as now met in presbytery,—and constitute in the name and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the alone Head of his Church; judicially to acknowledge, declare and

assert,—
assert,—the doctrine, worship, government, and discipline of this Church; in opposition to the several steps of defection and deviation therefrom.

Section I. Concerning doctrine.

I. Likeas the presbytery did, and hereby do acknowledge, declare and assert,—That the light of nature and the works of creation and providence, without the aid of tradition or revelation, shew that there is a God; who hath lordship and sovereignty over all;—as also, that thereby his wisdom, power and goodness are so far manifested, that all men are left inexcusable: According to the doctrine held forth from the word of God in our Confession of Faith, [chap. i. § 1, chap. xxi. § 1.]. And they hereby reject and condemn all contrary principles and tenets; that are maintained by Mr Campbell, the Socinians, and others.

II. In like manner they acknowledge, declare and assert,—That the word of God, contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, is not only a sufficient rule, or the principal rule,—but that it is the only rule to direct us, how we ought to glorify God and enjoy him;—and that “the authority of the holy scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church,—but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the Author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the word of God;—” And that “the supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined,—and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits are to be examined,—and in whose sentence we are to rest; can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the scripture:” According to Confession, [chap. i. § 4, 10.]; and the answer to the third question in the Larger and the second question in the Shorter Catechism;—with the scriptures cited. And they hereby reject and condemn all Deistical, Socinian and Popish errors,—contrary to, or inconsistent herewith.

III. Like-
III. Likewise they hereby acknowledge, declare and assert,—That the Lord Jesus Christ (the eternal Son of God by ineffable, incomprehensible, and necessary generation) is JEHovah, the most high God, self-existent and independent: And that he is necessarily existent;—and that the terms, necessary existence, Supreme Deity, and the title of the only true God,—cannot be taken in a sense that includes the personal property of the Father: but belong to the Son and Holy Ghost equally with the Father: And that the three persons of the adorable Trinity are numerically one in substance or essence, equal in power and in glory:—According to the doctrine held forth from the word of God in our Confession, [chap. ii. § 3.]; and the answer to the question in the Larger and Shorter Catechism,—How many persons are there in the Godhead? and the answer to the question in the Larger Catechism,—How doth it appear that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father? And they hereby reject and condemn all contrary principles vented by Mr Simson; and all other Arian, Socianian and Sabellian tenets,—contrary to the above doctrine, or inconsistent therewith.

IV. Also they acknowledge, declare and assert,—That God has, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy council of his own will, freely and unchangeably decreed and ordained whatsoever comes to pass in time: And particularly, that he hath predestinated some of mankind unto eternal life, before the foundation of the world was laid,—and according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the council and good pleasure of his own will allenarly;—and that they who are thus predestinated, are chosen unto everlasting glory out of his mere free grace and love; without any foresight of faith, good works,—or perseverance in either of them; or any other thing in them, as conditions or causes moving him thereto: And all to the praise of his glorious grace: According to the doctrine held forth from the scriptures, [Conf. chap. iii. § 1, 5.]. And they hereby reject and condemn all contrary principles, contained in the Assemblies Catechism revised; and all other Pelagian and Arminian errors, inconsistent herewith.

V. Like-
V. Likewise they acknowledge, declare and assert,—
That, when God created man, he entered into a covenant with him; wherein life was promised, upon condition of his perfect and personal obedience;—and that in this covenant (commonly called the covenant of works), the first Adam stood in the capacity of a public covenant-head and representative unto all his posterity: And that, by reason of his breach of this covenant, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation—sinned in him their head and representative; and fell with him, in his first transgression: And that his sin is truly and justly imputed to them every one: And that, upon account of this sin imputed,—all infants descending from Adam by ordinary generation, want that original righteousness wherewith Adam was created; and are by nature children of wrath:—According to Conf. [chap. vi § 3, 4, 6. chap. vii § 2.]; and Larg. Cat. [quest. 20, 22, 25, 27.]; Short. Cat. [quest. 12, 16.];—and the scriptures cited. And they hereby reject and condemn all contrary tenets maintained by Mr Simson, and the Reviser of the Assemblies Catechism; and all other principles contrary to, or inconsistent herewith.

VI. Likewise they acknowledge, declare and assert,—
That man, by his fall into a state of sin, is wholly dead in trespasses and sins; and hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation: And that man, in a natural state, being enmity against God and averse from all spiritual good,—is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or prepare himself thereto; and consequently, that there is no necessary nor certain connexion, either in the nature of things or by any divine promise,—between the morally serious endeavours of man in a natural state, and the obtaining special or saving grace:—Conf. [chap. ix. § 3. chap. x. § 2, 3.]. And they hereby reject and condemn all opposite principles maintained by Mr Simson; and all Arminian errors inconsistent herewith. Notwithstanding they assert, That it is the duty of all, and every one, to give diligent attendance upon the ordinances of divine institution and appointment; particularly the reading and hearing of the word, and prayer: These being
being the ordinary means by which converting and quickening grace is communicated, to such as are dead in trespasses and sins;—according to Larg. Cat. [quest. 153, 155.]; and Short. Cat. [quest. 85, and 88.].

VII. Also they acknowledge, declare and assert,—That the light of nature is not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and of his will, which is necessary to salvation: And therefore they who do not profess the Christian religion cannot be saved; be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profess:—According to Conf. [chap. i. § 1. chap. x. § 4.]; Larg. Cat. [quest. 60.]. And they condemn all Socinian or other tenets inconsistent therewith, in the foresaid Catechism revised: And particularly Mr Simson’s erroneous doctrine, concerning an obscure revelation and offer of grace made to all without the Church; and Mr Campbell’s erroneous opinion;—that the laws of nature are in themselves a certain and sufficient rule to direct rational minds to happiness; and that our observing of these laws, is the great mean and instrument of our real and lasting felicity.

VIII. Further, they acknowledge, declare and assert,— That the second Person of the adorable Trinity did, in the fullness of time, assume the human nature into a personal union with his divine; that he took to him a true body and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary,—and born of her, yet without sin; and that he is very God and very man, in two distinct natures and one person for ever;—according to Conf. [chap. viii. § 2.], and the scriptures cited. And they hereby reject and condemn all Nestorian and Sabellian principles and tenets, contrary to or inconsistent herewith; whether vented in the foresaid Catechism revised, or other erroneous treatises of that kind.

IX. Further, they acknowledge, declare and assert,—That the eternal Son of God, who was made manifest in the flesh, did, in our nature, as the second Adam, the public head and representative of elect sinners, and the undertaking Surety for them,—yield a perfect obedience to the law as a covenant of works, in the room and stead of
elect sinners; and that in their room and stead alone,—he bore
the whole of that punishment threatened in the law, and incurred
by the breach of it: And that, in his sufferings unto death, he
substituted himself in the room of sinners,—and endured that
curse, bore that wrath, and died that death which is the wages
and just desert of every sin, and which the sinner himself should
have undergone: And that the sufferings of the Son of God in
our nature were a true, proper and expiatory sacrifice; and a
proper, real, and complete satisfaction unto the justice of God
for sin:—According to Conf. [chap. viii. § 1, 4, 5. chap. xi §
3.]; Larg. Cat. [quest. 71.];—and the scriptures cited. And they
hereby reject and condemn all opposite principles held forth in
the foresaid Catechism; and all other Arminian and Baxterian
tenets, contrary to or inconsistent herewith.

X. Also they acknowledge, declare and assert,—That the
obedience of Christ in his life, and his sufferings unto death,
(commonly called his active and passive obedience),—is that
perfect and complete righteousness, on the account of which
alone a sinner is justified in the sight of God; and that it is upon
the account of this righteousness imputed, that sin is
pardoned,—and that the persons of any are accepted as
righteous in the sight of God; and that this righteousness
imputed, is the only foundation and ground of a sinner’s right
and title unto eternal life: And although the grace of faith be the
instrument, whereby we receive and apply Christ and his
righteousness; yet neither faith, gospel-repentance, nor our
sincere obedience, either all of them together or any of them
separately,—are our justifying righteousness in the sight of
God, or the ground of our acceptance, or of our right and title
unto eternal life:—According to Conf. [chap. xi. § 1.], Larg.
Cat. [quest. 73.]; and the scriptures cited. And they hereby
reject and condemn all opposite principles contained in the
foresaid Catechism; and all other Popish, Arminian or Baxterian
tenets, contrary to or inconsistent herewith.

XI. Also they acknowledge, declare and assert,—That
any want of conformity to the righteous and holy law of God is
a sin, as well as all actual and voluntary transgressions of the
law, [Conf. chap. vi. § 4, 6. Larg. Cat. quest. 24.]
And that every sin doth, in its own nature, deserve the wrath and curse of God,—both in this life and that which is to come; according to Conf. [Chap. xv. § 4.] and Larg. Cat. [quest. 152.]: And consequently, that the original corruption and depravation of our nature is a damnable sin, [Conf. chap. vi. § 6.]; and that sinning and suffering will be the misery of the damned in hell through eternity. And they hereby reject and condemn all contrary principles contained either in the foresaid Catechism Revised, or maintained and defended by Mr Simson; and all other contrary Pelagian and Arminian tenets whatsoever.

XII. Likewise they acknowledge, declare and assert,—That the supreme and only standard, measure and rule of all virtuous and religious actions,—is the righteous and holy will and law of God; and not our own self-interest and pleasure: According to the doctrine held forth from the word, Conf. [chap. i. § 2.]; Larg. Cat. [quest. 3.] Short. Cat [quest. 2.]. And they hereby reject and condemn all contrary principles and tenets, maintained by Mr Campbell, and others.

XIII. Also they hereby acknowledge, declare and assert,—That although all that believe in Jesus are delivered from the moral law as a covenant of works, so as thereby they are neither justified nor condemned; yet they are under perpetual and indissoluble obligations, to conform themselves to the moral law as a rule of their obedience: Not only because of blessings and benefits which they have received,—but from the authority of God as he is JEHOVAH, the great Lawgiver; whose perfections are infinitely glorious and excellent, and whose dominion is over all:—According to Conf. [chap. xix. § 5, 6.]. And they hereby reject and condemn all contrary principles held forth in the foresaid Catechism; and all other Antinomian principles and tenets inconsistent herewith.

XIV. Further, they acknowledge, declare and assert,—That God hath all life, glory, goodness, and blessedness in and of himself;—and is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient; not standing in need of creatures which he hath made, nor deriving any glory from them,—but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them: And that he hath most sovereign dominion over them; to do by
them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever himself pleaseth: And that any rewards that he has promised to any of his creatures, are free and voluntary; and that, in all their obedience, worship, and service,—they can neither profit him, nor be any way advantageous unto him:—According to the doctrine held forth from the word of God, Conf. [chap. ii. § 2. chap. vii. § 1.]. And they hereby reject and condemn all contrary principles and tenets, maintained by Mr Campbell and others.

XV. In like manner, they hereby acknowledge, declare and assert,—That the principal and leading motive and spring of true love to God, or of acceptable obedience and service unto him, is not our own self-interest or our own happiness and felicity,—though the same is by divine condescension inseparably connected therewith; but that the leading motive of all true love to God, is the supereminent and glorious perfections and excellencies of his nature,—as they shine forth and are manifested in the person of him who is IMMANUEL, God with us; and that all who truly love God, do love him chiefly for himself: As also, that all acceptable obedience and service unto him—is primarily and chiefly influenced from a regard unto the authority of God in Christ, expressed in his holy law; and proceeds from a principle of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ: And that the principal and chief end of all such obedience is, that God may be honoured and glorified in our bodies and spirits which are his: And consequently, all that obedience and service to God that is principally influenced, and primarily springs from one’s self-interest, advantage or applause, or from fear of punishment or the hope of a reward,—is legal, mercenary and servile; and moves in no higher sphere than what men in a natural state may attain unto:—According to the doctrine held forth from the scriptures, Conf. [chap. xvi. § 2, 7.]; Larg. and Short. Cat. [quest. 1.]. And they hereby reject and condemn all contrary errors maintained by Mr Simson and Mr Campbell, as having a direct tendency to make all our acts of obedience and worship servile and mercenary; and so to destroy and overturn the specific difference that is between common and saving grace,—or between the obedience of the temporary, and the obedience of the sound believer; and to establish only a gra-
dual difference between common grace in the one hand and saving grace in the other,—which is the gross error of Mr Baxter, and of the Arminians, and others.

XVI. In like manner, they acknowledge, declare and assert,—That all such as have saving faith, believe in the Lord Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God: And that the Apostles and Disciples of our Lord, in the days of his humiliation, did acknowledge, believe in and worship their Lord and Master as the true promised Messiah, the Son of the living God, the only begotten of the Father; and expected from him spiritual and eternal life and salvation: And that all who truly believe in the Lord Jesus, can neither totally nor finally fall away from a state of grace: And that the faith of the Apostles and Disciples of our Lord did not fail, in the interval of time between his death and resurrection; and therefore whatever clouds and doubts they were under,—they were never so far left as to conclude, that their Lord and Master was a downright deceiver and impostor:—According to Conf. [chap. viii. § 1. chap. xiv. § 2. chap. xvii. § 1, 3.]; Larg. Cat. [quest. 72. Short. Cat. quest. 86.];—and scriptures cited. And they hereby reject and condemn all contrary principles and tenets maintained by Mr Campbell, or contained in the foresaid Catechism Revised; and all other principles and tenets inconsistent herewith.

Section II. Concerning Worship, Government and Discipline.

THE PRESBYTERY likewise taking to their serious consideration,—That the Testimony of the Church of Christ in this land has, ever since our reformation from Popery, been stated in a special manner for the prerogative Royal of the Prince of the Kings of the earth,—as King, Head, and Lord over his own house; and for the government, worship, and discipline which he has appointed and instituted in the same;—though, in this perilous time wherein their lot is cast, the doctrine is also undermined and subverted; which (as has been observed) was not the trial of this Church in former periods: Therefore they judge it their duty to bear testimony for the so-

vereignty
vereignty and headship of the Lord Jesus over his own house; and to declare their adherence to the contendings, wrestlings and testimonies of this Church and her several members, both Ministers and Professors,—for the same.

I. Like as the Ministers associate for the exercise of church government and discipline in a presbyterial capacity, being now met in presbytery, did and hereby do acknowledge, declare and assert,—That the Lord Jesus Christ, our great IMMANUEL, and he alone, is King over Zion the hill of his holiness; And that he is the only Head, Lord, and Lawgiver, over his own house; and that to him alone it appertains to give officers, laws and ordinances to the Church,—which is his spiritual, free, and independent kingdom;—and that the office-bearers in the house of God, and all their several spiritual and ecclesiastical functions and administrations,—as also all the courts and judicatories appointed by the Lord Jesus in the Church, his spiritual kingdom; are subordinate to him alone, in their ecclesiastical administrations;—and that the office-bearers of the Church have power, warrant and authority from the Lord Jesus,—to hold General Assemblies, as well as other subordinate ecclesiastical judicatories, for the exercise of church government and discipline,—either at stated times, or occasionally, as the circumstances or necessity of the Church requires; and to dissolve themselves, and to appoint the time of their next meeting: According to the word of God*; and the laudable acts and constitutions of this Church, (particularly act, sess. 26. Assembly 1638; and act Assembly 1647, approving the Confession of Faith, sess. 23.);—It being always free to the civil magistrate to call Synods and Assemblies of Ministers and Elders, for consulting and advising with them in matters of religion, upon any necessary occasion,—according to the foresaid acts. And they hereby reject and condemn the following Erastian principles and tenets:

1. That the civil magistrate is supreme over all persons, and in all causes,—ecclesiastical as well as civil.

2. That the office-bearers of the Church, in their spiritual and ecclesiastical functions and administrations, are subordinate unto the civil magistrate.

3. That

3. That the external government of the Church is precarious, or depends upon the will and pleasure of the civil magistrate.

4. That the ordering and disposing of the external government and policy of the Church, doth properly belong to the civil magistrate,—by virtue of his prerogative and supremacy in causes ecclesiastic: And that the civil magistrate may emit such constitutions, acts and orders, concerning the administration of the external government of the Church, and concerning all ecclesiastical meetings and matters to be proposed and determined therein,—as he in his wisdom shall think fit; as was enacted by Parliament*, and practiced in the late persecuting times. All which, and the like principles and tenets, have a direct tendency to confound the ecclesiastic and civil jurisdictions: And have been witnessed against by the faithful ministers and members of this Church, as dishonouring to the Son of God; and divesting him of his prerogative royal as King over the Church,—his own free, spiritual, and independent kingdom.

II. Likewise they acknowledge, declare and assert,—That the Lord Jesus, the alone King and Head of his Church, hath appointed a particular form of government to take place therein,—distinct from the civil government, and not subordinate to the civil magistrate; which form of government is to continue to the end of the world, unalterable: And that presbyterial church-government, without any superiority of office above a teaching presbyter,—in the due subordination† of kirk-sessions to presbyteries, or presbyteries to provincial synods, and of provincial synods to general Assemblies,—is that only form of government laid down and appointed by the Lord Christ in his word;—which form of government has been received and owned by this Church, as the only government of divine institution and appointment; as is evident from her public acts and constitutions, particularly from the second book of discipline,—and the propositions concerning church government (with the scripture proofs and arguments annexed), as the said propositions were received and approven

*Act 1. Parl. 2 Cha. II.

†The Presbytery, in their Formula, which was framed soon afterwards, did insert these explicatory words, viz. [of judicatories, such as].
by the Assembly 1645, sess. 16. And they hereby reject and condemn the following principles and tenets; whether Erastian, Prelatic, or Sectarian:

1. That the Lord Jesus Christ hath not appointed in his word, any particular form of government in his Church under the New Testament; a principle highly reflecting upon the head of the Church,—as if he had not been as faithful in his own house as a Son, as Moses was as a servant.

2. That the Diocesan Bishop, or Prelate, is an officer superior to a teaching presbyter; which principle stands condemned by several acts and constitutions of this Church,—as contrary to the word of God, as a gross usurpation in the House of God, and which brought forth ANTI-CHRIST that man of sin.

3. That a particular congregational Church is not subordinate nor accountable unto any superior judicatory: Which principle and tenet is also condemned by the laudable acts and constitutions of this Church, as contrary to the word of God; and as having a native and direct tendency to introduce a licentious laxness in principle, and an universal discord in practice, in the House of God.

III. Also they acknowledge, declare and assert,—That unto the office-bearers of the Church, and to them alone, the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed: Particularly the key of doctrine,—for expounding and preaching the word, and determining controversies of faith according to the scriptures;—the key of government and discipline, for preserving the beauty and purity of the Church,—and for inflicting of church censures upon the erroneous, the scandalous and obstinate; that she may be preserved or purged from such errors in principle, or such scandals in practice, whereby she may be in danger of being corrupted;—as also the key of ordination and mission, for the ordaining and sending forth of Church-officers for spiritual service and ministration in the House of God:—According to [Mat. xvi. 19. John xx. 23. Mat. xvii. 18. Acts xv. Acts xvii. 4. Mat. xxviii. 19, 20. Mark xvi. 15. 2 Tim. ii. 2.]; the Books of Discipline, propositions concerning church-government and ordination of Ministers, and other laudable acts and constitutions of this Church.

And concerning that power and authority which belongs to the office-bearers of the Church in their judicative capacity,
pacity, they further declare and assert,—That the same is only a stewardly and ministerial authority; subordinate unto the authority and laws of the Head of the Church, declared and published in his own word. And, to express it in the words of our Confession (chap. xxxi. § 3.),—“It belongeth to synods and councils, ministerially to determine controversies of faith and cases of conscience; to set down rules and directions, for better ordering of the public worship of God and government of his Church; to receive complaints in cases of mal-administration, and authoritatively to determine the same: Which decrees and determinations, if consonant to the word of God, are to be received with reverence and submission; not only for their agreement with the word,—but also for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God appointed thereunto in his word.”

And they hereby reject and condemn the following Sectarian principles;—That the keys of government and discipline are given, by the Head of the Church, to the whole community of the faithful; and that ecclesiastical Synods and councils have only a mere consultative power and authority: Which principles they condemn, as contrary to the word of God,—the laudable acts and constitutions of this Church founded thereupon; and as having a native tendency to introduce anarchy and confusion into the house of God.

IV. Likewise they acknowledge, declare and assert,—That ministers and other office-bearers in the Church ought to be set over congregations, by the call and consent of the majority of such in these congregations who are admitted to full communion with the Church in all her sealing ordinances; and that there should be no preference of voices in this matter, upon the account of any secular consideration: According to [Acts i. 16. to the close of the chapter, Acts vi. 2—6. chap. xiv. 23. John x. 4, 5. 1 John iv. 1. James ii. 1,—6.], with many other scriptures; and according to our books of discipline and acts of assembly, agreeable thereto. And they reject and condemn all contrary principles, tenets and practices,—whereby the scripture-rule and pattern, in this important matter, is denied and rejected; and ministers are imposed upon dissenting and reclaiming congregations.

V. In
V. In like manner, they do hereby own and assert,—The perpetual obligation of the National Covenant of Scotland, frequently subscribed by persons of all ranks in this kingdom; and particularly as approven of and explained by the General Assembly 1638,—and sworn by all ranks of persons Anno 1639, and ratified by act of parliament 1640. As also, they own and assert the perpetual obligation of the Solemn League and Covenant for maintaining and carrying on a work of reformation in the three kingdoms; taken and subscribed by all ranks in Scotland and England, Anno 1643,—ratified by act of parliament of Scotland, Anno 1644: And particularly as renewed in Scotland, with an acknowledgement of sins and engagement to duties, by all ranks, Anno 1648. Concerning which oaths and covenants, they declare and assert,—That, as to the matter of them, they were lawful, being plainly contained in the word of God; and as to their ends, they were laudable and necessary: And therefore they did and hereby do declare their adherence to the same.

VI. Likewise they hereby receive, acknowledge and approve,—all the several pieces of reformation attained unto by this Church in her several reforming periods; particularly the Confession of Faith, compiled by the Assembly of divines who met at Westminster, with Commissioners from the Church of Scotland;—which Confession they receive and own as the Confession of their Faith; as the same was received and approven by act of Assembly 1647, Sess. 23. As also they receive and own the whole doctrine contained in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, compiled by the foresaid Assembly at Westminster; and approven by acts of Assembly 1648, sessions 10 and 19,—as a part of uniformity in catechising, for the three kingdoms; and ratified by act of Parliament, February 7th 1649. As also, the Form of Church-government and ordination of Ministers; as the same was received and approven by act of Assembly 1645, Sess. 16;—and the Directory for public worship, as the same stands approven by act of Assembly 1645, Sess. 10: Together with all the acts of Assembly from 1638 to 1650, and since that time*; in as far as they were passed for advancing and

*As this general reception is not absolute,—with regard to Acts of Assembly from 1638 to 1650, or to Acts of Assembly since that time, but wholly under the general restriction here added: So it takes in all
and carrying on a covenanted reformation,—agreeable to the word of God, and the received principles and constitutions of this Church.

VII. Likewise they hereby declare their *adherence* to the several Testimonies, Declarations and Warnings,—emitted in behalf of the covenanted reformation of this Church, from the year 1650 to the year 1688: Particularly to the contending and wrestlings during that period, whereby a great cloud of witnesses resisted even unto blood; in testifying for the supremacy and headship of the Lord Jesus over his own House, and other branches of our covenanted reformation,—in opposition to abjured Prelacy, and that blasphemous supremacy usurped by the civil powers over the House of God under the foresaid period†. And they hereby *condemn* all ecclesiastical censures whatsoever, passed or inflicted upon any, whether Ministers, elders or others,—from the year 1650 to this time; for their adherence unto, or witnessing for, any branch of our covenanted reformation‡.

VIII. Also they hereby declare their *adherence* to the several Testimonies, whether given in by representations and petitions to the several General Assemblies, or otherwise emitted and published since the year 1688,—against the several sinful omissions of the judicatories of this Church above mentioned; or the several steps of declining and backsliding in this present age, from a covenanted Reformation

Acts of Assembly, from the period mentioned down to the time of stating the secession,—as far as they can agree with that restriction.

†This general *adherence* cannot be justly constructed of, as if it meant an adopting or approving of every thing, either as to matter or manner,—in all these testimonies, declarations, warnings, contendings and wrestlings: It can only mean an adherence to all these, so far as in behalf of the covenanted Reformation of this Church; and so far as belongs to the testifying here mentioned.

‡Betwixt the years 1650 and 1660, there were censures passed by the public Resolutioners against the Protesters,—for their testifying against the public resolutions; all which censures are here condemned. And after the Revolution, long before the stating of the secession,—several Ministers and others (who were testifying against public evils, particularly in the religious settlement at the Revolution) had censures passed against them, under the character of separatists from the Church: All which censures are here likewise condemned,—so far as passed against them for their adherence unto, or witnessing for any branch of our covenanted Reformation; yet without approving all their manner of testifying,—and without all the principles of them thought to...?.
mation once attained unto*:—And particularly, to the several Representations offered by the Ministers of this presbytery to the commission of the General Assembly that met at Edinburgh August 1733†: And to the paper that was afterwards emitted by them, intituled, [A Testimony to the Doctrine, Worship, Government and Discipline of the Church of Scotland]: As also, to the Reasons published by them, why they have not acceded to the judicatories of the established Church.

Conclusion.

Thus this PRESBYTERY have endeavoured to discharge themselves, of what they apprehend to be their duty in their present situation. And their design in the whole is, to bear Testimony to the truths of God,—opposed or assaulted in the present age; and against the defections and backslidings, whether in the present or former times;—for the glory of God, and the honour of his truth; and (if the Lord may be graciously pleased to bless this mean) to excite the present generation to search and try their ways,—and to turn again to the Lord, from whom we have every one deeply revolted: As also to bear testimony to Scotland’s covenanted reformation, for the sake of the generations to come; that they may consider, the palaces of Zion, and mark her bulwarks, and may know what the Lord has done for Scotland;—that they may set their hope in God; and may neither forget his works, nor be as their fathers a stubborn and rebellious generation,—that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God.

*This general adherence to the Testimonies given in, or emitted and published, since the year 1688;—is not absolute; but wholly under the general restriction here added,—owning these Testimonies no further than as against the sinful omissions of the judicatories of this Church above-mentioned, or the several steps of declining and backsliding in this present age from a covenanted Reformation once attained unto.

The amount of the whole is, that by the general clauses of this and the preceding paragraph,—the Associate Presbytery served themselves Heirs to all the witnessing work in behalf of our covenanted Reformation, ever since the decline thereof in the year 1650; adopting all former Testimonies in behalf thereof, so far as agreeing with this present Judicial Testimony: Without approving the manner of testifying, in a way of secession from the Revolution Church,—sooner than that manner of it came to be shut up unto, by the procedure of the Commission in November 1733.

†The adherence here declared to these Representations, certainly means an approving of them,—as a proper manner of testifying then, in a way of communion with the Established Church; But cannot mean an adherence to the ? of testifying ? when a secession was
And they obtest and entreat all ranks of persons whatsoever, into whose hands this their [Act, Declaration and Testimony] may come,—that laying aside all carnal and politic intendments, every thing may be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary: And that, in the fear of that great and dreadful name The Lord our God, they may consider both their own and the iniquities of our fathers; and may return unto the Lord, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ,—and a particular acknowledgment of sin, and unfeigned and thorough reformation: And, in returning to the Lord, we may hope and expect,—that he that hath torn us will heal us, and that he that hath smitten will bind us up. But, if we go on obstinately in our trespasses, we have just ground to fear,—that as we are at present pining away in our sins, and consumed under our manifold spiritual strokes and judgments; so a righteous and holy God may be provoked to come out of his place, and punish the inhabitants of this land for their iniquities: And that he may send a sword, or some desolating calamity and judgment,—to avenge the quarrel of his covenant.

May the LORD himself return: May he look down from heaven and behold, and visit this vine; the vineyard which his own right-hand hath planted, the branch which he hath made strong for himself. It is burnt with fire, it is cut down; they perish at the rebuke of his countenance. May his hand be upon the man of his right-hand, upon the Son of man whom he hath made strong for himself; so shall we not go back from him: May he quicken us, and we will call upon his name. Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts; cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.

Extracted by J.A. FISHER, Cls. Pres.

[The following Note was omitted at the foot of page 144,—about the penal statutes against Witches, viz.]

The Associate Presbytery is not to be considered, as having ever interested themselves in the affair of these penal statutes,—by way of particular approbation, as to the terms in which any of them were laid; or as to what method of process was prescribed by them, or ever practiced in consequence of them: Nor is it to be supposed, that the Presbytery would have taken any particular alteration of these statutes—for a subject of their consideration. What they saw cause to testify against, as among the public sins of the nation, is,—an absolute repealing of these statutes; “That there shall be no prosecution against any person for witchcraft, sorcery, enchantment, or conjuration.”
Step II. The Declinature.

In February 1737, before the publishing of the Judicial Testimony,—Mr Ralph Erskine Minister at Dunfermline and Mr Thomas Mair Minister at Orwel—gave in Declarations of secession to their Presbytery, and acceded to the Associate Presbytery; which Declarations were published along with that Testimony. And in September following, Mr Thomas Nairn Minister at Abbotshall gave in a Declaration of secession to his Presbytery; as did Mr James Thomson Minister at Burntisland, in June next year: whereupon they likewise acceded to the Associate Presbytery, at the first opportunities after their secessions.

In pursuance of an act of the Assembly 1738, their commission drew up and executed a libel against the eight Ministers of the Associate Presbytery,—in order to their appearing upon it before the Assembly 1739: By which libel their secession, their judicial Testimony, and several steps which they had accordingly taken for the relief of the Lord’s oppressed heritage,—were charged upon them, under the notion of crimes and offences. Wherefore these brethren did “reckon themselves especially called at this time, to declare themselves more fully and plainly, with respect to the present judicatories, than they had hitherto done.” Accordingly, when they were called to the bar of the Assembly, on the 17th day of May,—they went in as a constitute Presbytery: And after the libel was read, Mr Thomas Mair, as their Moderator, read and gave in their Declinature; which they had passed into an act the day before: And when each of them had declared their adherence to it, they withdrew.

This Declinature was intituled [ACT of the Associate Presbytery; finding and declaring, that the present judicatories of this Church are not lawful nor right constitute courts of CHRIST: And declining all authority, power and jurisdiction that the said judicatories may claim to themselves over the said Presbytery, or any of the members thereof,—or over any that are under their inspection; and particularly declining the authority of a General Assem-
bly now met in *Edinburgh*, the tenth day of *May*, One thousand seven hundred and thirty-nine years.]*. And it may suffice, in this place, to give the following *abstract* of the *grounds* of the said Declinature; containing an addition to the former state of the Secession-Testimony.

I. The present judicatories of this National Church not only receive into their number, but refuse to purge out from among them, and continue to support intruders,—and many who are notourly known to be guilty of such scandalous practices, as make them obnoxious to the censures of the Church; and who therefore have no warrant from the Lord and Head of the Church, to sit in his courts.

In all corners of the land, men are intruded into the pastoral office, and imposed upon the flock and heritage of God: Who therefore have no authority or warrant from Christ (the great Shepherd of the sheep) to feed the flock, but are rather grievous wolves,—who have entered in to the tearing, renting, wounding and scattering the flock of Christ; and consequently have no warrant from the King of Zion, to sit in the courts of his Kingdom. Yet the said judicatories support and encourage such, and refuse to purge them out from among them: And courts who receive and sustain such men as constituent members, notwithstanding of remonstrances and other means used by such as were aggrieved, to have them purged out, are not right constitute courts of Christ; wherefore his subjects have his warrant, to refuse and decline their authority and jurisdiction.

Likewise the present judicatories of this Church are constitute of a great many members who have given ground of offence to the Church and people of God, by their scandalous practices; in promoting and carrying on a course of defection from our received and covenanted principles: Many such members as are not only silent in the public cause of God, but dissemblers of public sins; who scatter and drive away the flock of Christ, and rule them with force and cruelty; and who have been active, either in screening the erroneous from a just and adequate censure, or in dismissing them without any censure at all. For all which practices, they ought to be deposed from the holy ministry,—according to the word of God, and the laud-
able acts and constitutions of this Church: And this Presbytery cannot hold the said judicatories, who are constitute of such members, as lawful and right constitute courts of Christ.

II. If the conduct of the judicatories of this national Church, for many years by-past, is duly considered;—how they have been active in carrying on a course of defection and backsliding from the Lord,—by tolerating the erroneous, by supporting and countenancing error; by enacting laws and constitutions contrary to the laws of the King of Zion,—whereby ministerial freedom is suppressed, and new and unwarrantable terms of ministerial and Christian communion are imposed,—and whereby the heritage of God is oppressed and broken: They cannot be held and repute as free and lawful courts of Christ.

The present judicatories are tolerating the erroneous, and supporting and countenancing error; as will appear from their conduct, both towards Mr Simson and Mr Campbell: And is made evident in the Judicial Act and Testimony published by this Presbytery, to which they refer. As also the last General Assembly, when several gross propositions were brought to their bar, which had been excerpted by the Presbytery of Edinburgh out of two sermons that Dr Wishart had preached; yet that Assembly refused to examine, whether the said propositions were contrary to our Confession of Faith or not: But, instead of this, they acquit the Doctor; upon a declaration that he made before them,—of his adherence unto the several articles of our Confession of Faith, to which it was alledged the said propositions were contrary.

Likewise arbitrary laws and constitutions have been enacted, whereby ministerial freedom is suppressed; and new and unwarrantable terms of ministerial and Christian communion are imposed. Such was the act of Assembly 1733, concerning the Ministers of the Presbytery of Dunfermline; as also, the act and sentence passed against the protesting Brethren by the said Assembly.——And the present judicatories of this Church are so far from returning to their duty,—that the violence done to the heritage of God, through all the corners of the land, is still carried on; as is evident from their conduct these several years by-past:

And
And that in opposition to instructions from many presbyteries and synods;—as also, notwithstanding of representations and petitions given in to several General Assemblies, from provincial synods,—and from a considerable number of Ministers, Elders and Christians through the land; the contempt cast upon which was an evidence, that they hated to be reformed.

And since the judicatories of this Church, instead of acknowledging and mourning over the above and like defections and backslidings, justify the steps they have taken; yea libel and cite the several Ministers of this Presbytery to their bar for censure,—for no other reason, if their libel is duly considered, but because the said Ministers endeavour to testify that their above-mentioned deeds are evil;—and all this, notwithstanding that the ordinary means have been used to reclaim them: Therefore this Presbytery judge that they are well warranted, from the Law and Testimony, to declare,—that they are not lawful nor right constitute Courts of Christ; and to decline them accordingly.

III. The present judicatories of this Church have subordinated themselves unto the civil powers,—in their ecclesiastical meetings, functions and administrations: And therefore this Presbytery cannot own them as free and lawful Courts of Christ.

The late act of Parliament concerning Captain John Porteous, appointed to be read from the pulpits of Scotland the first Lord’s day of every month for the space of a year,—is become a sad snare, both to Ministers and judicatories*. The most part of the Ministers of Scotland have read

*This John Porteous, a Captain in the Town-guard of Edinburgh, having fired and caused his men also to fire among the multitude, upon some provocation which he got when guarding the scaffold at an execution,—whereby a considerable number of persons were killed and wounded; he was condemned to suffer death, for the murders thus committed by him. But he obtained a reprieve, which it was supposed would be perpetual. Hereupon a great body of people, on the evening of the 7th of September 1736, having taken effectual measures to prevent opposition,—broke into the prison, carried him out; and gave him a public execution in the Grass Market.

At the ensuing session of Parliament, the act here referred to was passed: By which all persons charged with being accessory to the murder of
read this act, in one shape and another: And they have thereby subjected themselves, in the exercise of their spiritual function, to the civil powers; in regard they have, in obedience to their authority, delivered the doctrines and commandments of men, instead of the lively oracles of God,—to the Church assembled together for the public worship and service of God: Whereby the sabbath of the Lord has been prophaned, a wicked generation have been hardened, the sacred office of the Ministry has been exposed, and the Lord’s people stumbled and wounded.

Likewise, by their obedience to the foresaid act, they have directly consented to the Parliament’s taking the key of discipline into their own hands: In regard that, by one of the penalties annexed to the said act, it is declared,—That such as do not read the same, shall be incapable of sitting and voting in any ecclesiastical Court; whereby the Parliament take upon them to suspend Ministers of the Gospel from the exercise of a considerable part and branch of their ministerial work. As this is a great encroachment upon the kingdom of Christ,—and a sinful usurpation of his authority, who is the alone Supreme Head, Lord and Lawgiver to the Church, his own spiritual kingdom; so the readers of this act have, in so far, openly and expressly given up with his alone headship and supremacy over the same.

And although all the judicatories of this Church, supreme and subordinate, have met since the passing and reading of

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Captain Porteous, were commanded on pain of death to surrender themselves for trial within a limited time; all persons concealing or succouring them after that time, were adjudged to incur the pains of death; and persons were encouraged to become evidences against their accomplices, by a promise of pardon,—and of a great reward. [Yet no discovery was every made!]

And this act every Minister of the Church of Scotland was appointed to read from the pulpit, in the time of divine worship, on the first Lord’s day of every month for one whole year; under heavy ecclesiastical penalties, viz. “In case such Minister shall neglect to read this act as is hereby directed, he shall for the first offence be declared incapable of sitting or voting in any church-judicatory; and, for the second offence, be declared incapable of taking, holding or enjoying any ecclesiastical benefice in Scotland:” Which ecclesiastical penalties were appointed to be executed by the Court of Session, or any Court of Judiciary: upon a summary complaint, at the instance of his Majesty’s Advocate!
of the said act; yet the readers of it are not censured: Neither is there any Judicial Testimony emitted by the said judicatories, against the dishonour that is done to the King of Zion, and the encroachment that is made on his spiritual kingdom,—by this late act of Parliament. And in regard that it is so, this Presbytery cannot but look upon the whole body of this national Church to be involved in the sin; and that the judicatories thereof do now practically declare,—That they hold their meetings in subordination to the civil powers, and not to the King of Zion alone; and that they have virtually and materially given up with the alone headship and supremacy of the Lord Jesus over the Church, his purchased kingdom: So that they cannot own the present judicatories, as free and lawful Courts of the King of Zion*.

“Therefore,

*The seceding Brethren published, along with their Declinature, a copy of the Libel,—and Remarks upon it; as also upon the act of Assembly concerning them, after their Declinature was given in.——By this act, the Assembly found the libel relevant to infer deposition; and also found the same proven, in its most material articles,—by the Presbytery’s Act and Declinature read in their presence.

More particularly, they found by this Act,—that these brethren had taken upon them, in their Declinature, to speak in most injurious, disrespectful and insolent terms, concerning the highest civil authority: which could only respect the Testimony given by them, against the late act of Parliament concerning Porteous,—“But (say they) the seceding Ministers must here observe with regret, that the present judicatories are, by their procedure, involving themselves more and more in deep defection from the Lord. For it is plain, that when the Assembly have condemned, in the above manner, the Testimony that was given in their presence,—against the above encroachment on the Kingdom of Christ, and the sinful compliance of the Ministry of this Church therewith; they have thereby condemned a Testimony against the foresaid encroachment and compliance,—as a speaking in most injurious, disrespectful and insolent terms, of the highest civil authority. And in like manner, when the seceding Ministers are declared to deserve the highest censures of this Church, and particularly deposition, on account of their Testimony against the sinfulness of the foresaid act of Parliament; it is also plain, that a silent submission unto the above encroachment upon the Kingdom of Christ, without any suitable Testimony against the same,—is made a term of ministerial communion, by the present judicatories. For, according to the above words of their act of Assembly, if any shall say that the act of Parliament anent Captain John Porteous contained a sinful and Erastian encroachment upon the Kingdom of Christ,—they speak in most injurious, insolent and disrespectful terms of the highest civil authority; and deserve the highest censures of the Church, particularly that of deposition.”
“Therefore, and for all the above reasons, this Presbytery judge it their duty to declare, like as hereby they find and declare, — That the present judicatories of this national Church are not lawful nor right constitute Courts of CHRIST: And therefore they did and hereby do decline all authority, power and jurisdiction, which any of the said judicatories may claim to themselves over this Presbytery, — or any of the members thereof, as to their ministerial office, conduct or character; or over any who have subjected themselves to their presbyterial oversight or inspection. And particularly, for the grounds and reasons above-mentioned, they did and thereby do decline any power, authority or jurisdiction that this General Assembly now met at Edinburgh may assume to themselves, — of proceeding in a way of censure against all or any of the members of this Presbytery; for their secession from the present judicatories, their presbyterial association, or the matters contained in the Judicial Act and Testimony emitted by them, — or any other matters whatsoever, relative to the said Secession and the said Testimony: And that in regard the present judicatories cannot be competent judges, in a Testimony for the reformed and covenanted principles of the Church of Scotland, — from which they have so deeply swerved, by so many lamentable steps of defection from the same. And further, for the above grounds and reasons, this Presbytery did and hereby do declare, — That any act, sentence or deed that may be done or passed against all or any one of them, by any of the present judicatories, — whereby their ministerial office or the exercise thereof, or their pastoral relation to their respective congregations, may be affected or prejudged, — shall be held and repute as null and void in itself; And that it shall be lawful and warrantable for them, notwithstanding of any such act, sentence or deed, — to exercise their ministry, in as full and ample a manner as hitherto they have done; as if no such act, sentence or deed, had been done or passed against them. In like manner, they did and hereby do declare, — That notwithstanding of any act, sentence or deed, done or passed to the prejudice of their pastoral relation to their several
"several congregations; the people of their respective congregations shall be held, bound and obliged, (according to the solemn engagements they came under, when the several brethren of the Presbytery were ordained to the holy Ministry among them) still to own and acknowledge them as their lawful and sent pastors: As also, that they shall be bound and obliged to hold and account any, whether Ministers or Probationers, who (in consequence of any act, sentence or deed, done or passed against any of the members of this Presbytery) shall exercise any part of the ministerial work in their respective congregations,—as intruders upon their ministerial work and labours:—And that in regard the members of this Presbytery have been and are endeavouring, through the strength, conduct and leading of divine grace,—to display and prosecute the ends of a Judicial Testimony for the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government of the Church of Scotland; and against several steps of defection from the same, both in former and present times;—to which Testimony both Ministers and People of all ranks in this covenanted land are, by the solemn oath of God, bound to adhere*."

This Act was concluded with an earnest call to the judicatories of the Church, to return unto the Lord,—in a proper course of reformation: And (upon supposition that these their sincere and hearty desires should be despised and contemned by the said judicatories) with an entreating of both Ministers and Elders, who regarded the covenanted Testimony of the Church of Scotland, and who desired to

*This Assembly referred to the next General Assembly, the inflicting of what they reckoned just censure upon the seceding Brethren: “To which” (as their act bears) “they earnestly recommend to inflict the censure of deposition, without further delay; upon such of the said defenders as shall not, betwixt and that time, either in presence of the Commission to be named by this Assembly, or of the ensuing General Assembly,—retract the said pretended Act and Declinature, and return to their duty and submission to this Church.”

And the next Assembly did “actually depose” them “from the office of the holy Ministry; prohibiting and discharging them, and every one of them, to exercise the same or any part thereof within this Church, in all time coming.”
to be found faithful to the Lord,—that they would come out from the present judicatories, and from all ministerial communion with them; that they would make use of the keys of government and discipline committed to them by the Head of the Church, for the ends and purposes for which they were given them;—and that they would put to their hand, to lift up the standard of a Judicial Testimony for the born-down truths of God,—and for purging and planting the House of God in Scotland; according to the word of God, and our Reformation-principles agreeable thereto,—and after the example of our worthy progenitors, in the year 1638.

Step III.

The Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace.

The Associate Presbytery having had under their consideration, for about two years,—an Enlargement of their Testimony, with respect to some injuries done to the Doctrine of Grace by several Acts of Assembly; this matter was at length concluded, by an Act passed at Edinburgh,—on the 21st day of October, 1742*.

This act was afterwards published, bearing the following title, viz. [ACT of the Associate Presbytery, concerning the Doctrine of Grace: Wherein the said Doctrine, as revealed in the holy Scriptures, and agreeably thereto set forth in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms, is asserted; and vindicated from the errors vented and published in some Acts of the Assemblies of this Church, passed in prejudice of the same: With an Introduction, discovering the rise and progress of the opposition to the Doctrine of Grace; and the reasons of passing and publishing this Act, in vindication of the same.]

*About an year before this time, the Reverend Mr William Wilson had been removed by death. But by this time there were twelve new Ministers in the Associate Presbytery, who had been ordained by them within about two years preceding; and, at the meeting here referred to, the Reverend Mr Andrew Arrot, Minister at Dunnichen, acceded to them: So that the Presbytery then contained twenty Ministers; only two of whom now remain in the Associate Synod, at the distance of about thirty-two years.
ture we have always in him, as our new Covenant-head; and always access to the benefit of it by faith: And as, without this faith, it is impossible to please God by any duty or service; so, by this faith, we are in case to please God,—to serve him spiritually and acceptably. There is no comparison between the furniture we once had in the first Adam, and this furniture we have in Christ; which is no less than all the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in him, so as we also are compleat in him.—And as for the great work of covenancing to serve and obey him, we may with humble confidence set about it in the faith of this new-covenant furniture we have in Jesus Christ;—saying, I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only*.

STEP IV.

The Act for renewing our COVENANTS.

During the time that the Associate Presbytery had under consideration—an enlargement of their Testimony concerning the Doctrine of Grace; they were likewise considering upon a renovation of our solemn Covenants,—a paving the way for which, was the occasion and design of that enlargement. Accordingly, an overture of an act for this purpose was approved of by them—the same day on which they passed their act concerning the doctrine of grace; October 21st 1742. But, upon an occasion which will be explained under the next Step, and from a desire of proceeding with great deliberation in a matter of so much importance; the Presbytery then agreed that there should be access for all members, present or absent, to propose any difficulties they might have at next meeting. And the matter was left in this state, from one meeting to another; till the 23d day of December 1743: At which time, the said overture (having undergone sundry amendments and enlargements since the former approbation of it) was unanimously approved of and enacted

enacted.—And it was soon afterwards published, along with the act concerning the doctrine of grace, under the following title, viz. [ACT of the Associate Presbytery, for RENEWING the NATIONAL COVENANT of Scotland and the SOLEMN LEAGUE and COVENANT of the three nations; in a way and manner agreeable to our present situation and circumstances in this period.]

The Introduction to this Act bears,—That, “agreeably to scripture-precepts and patterns, of perpetual obligation and use; the reformation of religion in Scotland hath, through the several periods thereof, been carried on in a way of covenanting:” and that “the Associate Presbytery being led out in the course of sovereign and holy providence, to essay the revival of reformation; have judged it their duty to essay, for this purpose, the revival of covenanting.”

The act begins with considering the state of the reformation from Popery, in this land: The covenanting work of our reforming periods; conformable to scripture-prophecies and promises*: “The public breaches of these solemn oaths and covenants: The perpetual and indispensable obligation thereof: The duty of a public confessing, acknowledging and avouching of the Lord to be our God,— required in the first commandment of the moral law, and enjoined with the greatest solemnity†; though but the smaller part of a people should be disposed to concur in such an important and solemn duty‡: The frequent practice thereof by the church, as recorded in scripture; especially after gross backsliding and defection||: The promises of this taking place in New-Testament days§: And that the former practice of solemn covenanting in this church and land,—has been found a special mean, through the Lord’s blessing, of a reviving unto them out of their bondage.

The Presbytery do then call, obtest, and beseech all sorts of persons in this land ——and more particularly all such

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* Isa. xlii. 4. lv. 5. Micah iv. 2. Zech. ii. 11, Rev. xi. 15.
† Isa. xlv. 23. ‡ Isa. xix. 18.
|| 2 Chron. xv. 10.—16. xxiii. 16. xxix. 10. xxxiv. 31. 2 Cor. viii. 5.
such as have acceded to them; to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, on account of our iniquities both personal and national: to flee by faith to the atoning blood of the Lamb of God, for the expiation and remission of them; to turn from them unto the Lord,—and, with our hearts and souls, to renew our solemn vows and covenant-engagements unto the Most High God*.

They next take a view of the former method of renewing the national Covenant; that it was done in a Bond,—accommodating the same to the circumstances of the church and land, at the several times of the renovation: And that the renewing of the Solemn League and Covenant—was with a solemn acknowledgment of the breaches thereof, and with an engagement to the duties contained therein; agreeable to scripture-pattern and example [Ezra ix. 10. Neh. ix. 10.]; where the church and people of God, after a particular acknowledgment of their own sins and the sins of their fathers, engaged themselves against the particular evils and sins that prevailed among them; and to the duties incumbent upon them, in their situation and circumstances at that time.—After all this, the act proceeds in the following manner, viz.

THEREFORE, conform to the above scripture-examples, and agreeably to the above-mentioned laudable precedents in our own church and land; this Presbytery agree and resolve that the NATIONAL COVENANT of Scotland, and the SOLEMN LEAGUE and COVENANT of the three nations, shall be renewed and sworn,—in a MANNER suitable to the present circumstances of this church and land; by all such as shall willingly offer themselves unto the Lord, in this solemn work and duty. And for this end they appoint, that both covenants shall be renewed,—in a solemn acknowledgment of the public sins and breaches of the same; and in a solemn profession of our faith, and engagement unto the duties contained in them: The tenor whereof follows,† viz.

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* 2 Chron. xxx. 8. Jer. i. 5.

† The last edition of the acknowledgment and engagement, in 1771,—beside many other escapes and inaccuracies, contains a variety of gross errors which marr the sense; by misplacing, altering, changing, adding, and omitting words: But all these are carefully corrected here, according to the first edition. And some explanatory notes are added.
The ACKNOWLEDGMENT of SINS.

We all and every one of us, seriously considering—the great goodness of God manifested towards this land, in bringing our fathers first out of Pagan darkness; and afterwards, when Antichristian idolatry and superstition had overspread the whole land, in making the light of the glorious gospel of Christ break forth with such remarkable purity and power, that the thick clouds of Popish darkness were scattered,—and the house of God was reared up among us, in a great measure of conformity to the pattern laid down in the Lord’s word: As also, that all ranks of persons within this land did, by a national confession, oath and covenant, abjure particularly and expressly the errors and corruptions of Popery; and that, by the said oath and covenant, they did sundry times bind and oblige both themselves and their posterity to continue in the profession, faith and obedience of the true reformed religion,—as the same was held forth from the word of God, in our first Confession of Faith and books of discipline; and to defend the same, and resist all contrary errors and corruptions,—according to their vocation, all the days of their life: And likewise considering that all ranks of persons in the three kingdoms did, by a solemn League and Covenant, swear, each one of them for himself,—that they should sincerely, really and constantly, through the grace of God, endeavour, in their several places and callings, the preservation of the reformed religion in the Church of Scotland,—in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government; the reformation of religion in the kingdoms of England, and Ireland,—in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government,—according to the word of God, and the example of the best reformed churches; and that they should endeavour to bring the churches of God in the three kingdoms, to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, Confession of Faith, form of Church-government, directory for worship and catechising,—that they and their posterity after them might, as brethren, live in faith and love, and that the Lord might delight to dwell in the midst of us: As likewise, by the said covenant, every one bound and obliged themselves to personal reformation;
so that, in their several places and callings, they might endeavour national reformation: And, in pursuance of the above covenanted uniformity, the Assembly that met at Westminster, with commissioners from the Church of Scotland,—agreed upon a Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Form of Presbyterial church-government and of Ordination of ministers, with a Directory for the public worship of God; all which were received and approved by the General Assemblies of this church, in the manner expressed in the several acts adopting the same;—and they hold forth unto us, from the word of God, the same true reformed religion, in doctrine, worship, order and government,—which had been, from our reformation from Popery, believed and practiced in this church and land, and sworn to in our national covenant: And farther considering that all ranks of persons, both informer and present times, have treacherously departed from the Lord,—and have transgressed his laws, changed his ordinances, and broken his covenant; and that, at this time, we are under many heavy spiritual plagues,—which are the ordinary forerunners of desolating strokes and judgments, both upon churches and nations:—

Therefore, being warranted by the word of God, and the example of the church and people of God in scripture; and remembering the practice of our religious predecessors,—who have acknowledged before the Lord their departure from him (by unbelief, and manifold breaches of their solemn national engagements and covenants), and have engaged themselves to reformation;—and perceiving that this duty, when gone about in the faith of God’s promise, and in obedience to his command,—hath been attended with a reviving out of bondage, and with a blessing and success from heaven: WE DESIRE, in dependence upon the LORD JESUS, who is exalted a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and forgiveness of sins, to ACKNOWLEDGE; and in the faith of his atoning blood, and in the strength of the grace that is in Christ Jesus,—we CONFESS AND ACKNOWLEDGE, as in his sight who is the searcher of hearts, our own transgressions and the transgressions of this church and land.

We
We with our FATHERS have sinned, we have done wickedly; our kings, our princes, our nobles, our judges, our magistrates, our ministers, and people of all sorts. Though the Lord hath spoken long and clearly unto us in the word of the gospel, we have not hearkened to his voice; though we have made some profession of Christ, yet we have not, as we ought, received him into our hearts,—nor walked worthy of him in our lives; and in this particular instance we have, in a very eminent manner, transgressed the covenant of the Lord our God. Our own consciences within us, and the many spiritual judgments that we are under,—may convince us of our manifold, wilful, and renewed breaches of our solemn oaths and covenants.

Particularly, though the sinfulness of receiving into our bosom, and admitting into places of power and trust, such as were opposers of and enemies to a covenanted work of reformation,—was solemnly acknowledged in the year 1649, and reformation in this particular was sworn unto; yet, in a short time thereafter, in consequence of the Public Resolutions, places of power and trust were filled with such: And they were suddenly received into full church-communion and fellowship. And our backslidings did increase from time to time, till that general apostasy and defection,—when Charles II being restored to the government, all the legal securities given to a covenanted reformation, betwixt the years 1638 and 1650, were pulled down; all the several parliaments that met during this period, together with all their acts and proceedings in favours of reformation, were declared null and void: In like manner, the presbyterial order and government of the house of God, to the maintenance and preservation of which the whole land was solemnly sworn, was overthrown; and prelacy, which had been abjured by our covenants, was set up in its place: And likewise that famous Assembly which met at Glasgow in the year 1638, was declared by the parliament to be an unlawful and seditious meeting; and all that was done between the foresaid year and the year 1651, in prosecution of a covenanted reformation, was declared rebellious and treasonable; and the national covenant as sworn in the year 1638, together with the so-

lemn
The Acknowledgment of Sins.  

Period II.

The Leven League and Covenant, were declared to be unlawful oaths, and not binding on the lands; yea, such was the height of wickedness, that they were ignominiously burnt in some considerable places of the nation; As also, most sinful and wicked invasions were made upon the headship and sovereignty of our Lord Jesus Christ, the alone Head and King of his Church; by several parliamentary acts and deeds, asserting the king’s supremacy in all causes whatsoever,—and declaring that the ordering and disposal of the external government and policy of the church doth properly belong to the king, as an inherent right of the crown. And when prelacy was thus reared up, as the most part of the ministry made a sinful and shameful defection unto it; so the bulk and body of the land, in contradiction to our solemn oaths and covenants, did submit unto the same. Likewise, in this day of apostasy and defection, such of the ministry as complied not with prelacy did, upon the privy council’s proclamations, desert their synodical and presbyterial meetings; whence no judicial testimony was lifted up against the course of defection: yea, the most part of them left their own flocks, which thereby became a prey to the grievous wolves that were afterwards thrust in upon them.

Moreover, during this period of heinous backsliding, many sinful oaths, declarations and bonds, were imposed; and among others the oath of Allegiance, or rather Supremacy, with the Instrument assertory of the royal prerogative; the Declaration, and that self-contradictory oath the Test: By which oaths and bonds, the usurped supremacy over the house of God was acknowledged and recognized,—and a covenanted reformation was renounced and abjured; so that all ranks of persons in this land made themselves more and more vile, by the blackest perjury and the greatest apostasy from the Lord. And as if all this had not been enough, such as endeavoured to witness against that course of grievous backsliding, and who departed from evil,—became a prey to the greatest tyranny and cruelty; even to imprisonment, banishment, spoiling of their goods and cruel tortures. Yea, the blood of the witnesses for a covenanted reformation was shed in our principal cities, under colour of law; and likewise in the high
high places of the fields, without any legal process against them: Therefore, in our skirts is to be found the blood of those that have suffered for the testimony of Jesus; which is crying to heaven for vengeance against us, to this very day.

Also, in consequence of the above-mentioned usurped supremacy over the kingdom of Christ, in the years 1669 and 1672 Indulgences to some Ministers who had not conformed to prelacy were granted; under certain conditions, limitations and restrictions: Wherefore, as these indulgences had their rise, subsistence and conveyance from the above wicked supremacy,—and as the accepters of them were limited and restricted in the exercise of their ministry; so the acceptance of them was a departure from the word of Christ’s patience, which his servants and people in this land were called to hold fast,—especially in such a day of temptation and trial. Likewise, when the Duke of York, a professed Papist, was advanced to the throne a boundless Toleration was granted by this Popish prince; which was plainly designed for the introduction of Popery and slavery,—being expressly conveyed from the king’s absolute power, suspending and disabling all the penal statutes against Papists: and instead of a due testimony offered against the same, it was accepted by all the Ministers of the presbyterial denomination through the land, except a few only; with an address of thanks for the same by a considerable number of the said Ministers, in name of the rest.—Whereby we have been still further involved in the heinous guilt of departing more and more from the Lord.

As thus the beautiful order, the pure government and discipline of the House of the Lord,—was overturned, buried and forsaken; so that apostate prelatical Church (or party, and generally the whole land) did likewise reject Christ the chief Corner-stone, in the word of his grace and the purity of gospel-truth; for the maintaining of which this land was once so famous,—and whereby, at our Reformation, a nation was born at once, and a people brought forth as in one day: And instead of the purity of gospel truth, there was a general apostasy to Arminian and other anti-evangelic errors, perverting the gospel of Christ.

Though
Though the Lord was graciously pleased, by a very glorious and surprising appearance for these lands in the latter end of the year 1688, to deliver us from the yoke of tyranny and arbitrary government under which we then groaned; yet we have never, to this day, rendered unto him according to the benefits which we have received from him. We did not understand his wonderful works, neither remembered the multitude of his mercies. We provoked him at the sea, even at the Red Sea; and instead of waiting for his counsel, we followed the counsels of flesh and blood. We turned not unto him with our whole hearts, but feignedly. And our backslidings have increased from time to time,—till our apostasy and defection, in the present age, is come to an height, as to some particular instances, which was not known in former times.

Though the Lord wrought a great salvation for us the foresaid year, yet we said not,—Where is the Lord that brought us out of the land of Egypt? We returned not unto the Lord, by a free and particular confession and acknowledgment of our above and many other steps of defection and backsliding from him; nor by the renovation of our solemn covenant-engagements to the Most High God.

When the Estates of the nation were met in a free Parliament in the year 1690, our Presbyterial Church-government was settled according to its civil establishment in the year 1592; and all the steps of reformation attained to in that covenanting period betwixt 1638 and 1650, were neglected and passed by: Yea, in the said settlement of Presbytery, all that was done against a covenanted work of reformation, in the first session of Parliament of King Charles after his Restoration, is left untouched; particularly the infamous Act Rescissory, whereby all the acts and deeds of the foresaid covenanting period were declared null and void, is never repealed: Also that impious and wicked act, the second act of the second session of the same Parliament, declaring null and void the proceedings of that faithful Assembly at Glasgow in the year 1638, and all other acts and deeds of that reforming period,—stands in the body of our Scots law to this very day. And thus that
great work, which the Lord wrought with an outstretched arm in the day of our fathers, lies still buried under the grave-stone of several parliamentary acts and deeds; which is an iniquity that testifies against us to this very day. Likewise by the same Parliament in the year 1690, instead of our covenant-allegiance, which was judged a proper badge of loyalty in our reforming periods,—a general oath of allegiance to the Sovereign was imposed.

And as, in the above and like instances, the Estates of the nation shewed no disposition to return unto the Lord; so, when the first General Assembly of this Church did meet, the same year 1690,—they did not, in their ecclesiastical capacity, faithfully and particularly represent unto all ranks of persons through the land, their manifold iniquities and backslidings,—in order to excite them to humiliation and mourning before the Lord: They sat down upon the above civil establishment, without remonstrating against what was defective in the same; or making any express and particular acknowledgment of the many heinous backslidings of the former period: They did not, by any formal act, condemn the sacrilegious usurpation of the royal dignity of Zion's King: Nor did they, by any express act, assert him to be what he is,—The alone King and Head of his Church; in opposition to the above-mentioned usurpation of his royal prerogative,—and the indignities done unto the same by the many wicked acts and laws that were made, and the sinful oaths that were imposed in that period: Neither did they assert the Divine Right of Presbytery,—nor the intrinsic power of the Church, with respect to the calling of our national Assemblies; which are two special branches of the Redeemer's glorious headship in and over his Church: Likewise, they did not expressly approve our covenanted-reformation, attained unto from the year 1638 to the year 1650; neither did they plainly justify the wrestlings, testimonies and sufferings of the Lord's remnant for the same, in the late persecuting times: Also they did not, by any particular act of Assembly, assert the obligation of our Covenants, national and solemn league; and their binding force upon posterity: Nor did they particularly condemn the above-mentioned sinful oaths, declarations and bonds; and many other steps of defection from
from the Lord, during the foresaid period. And though the Lord, by his special and remarkable providence, brought the Ministers and Elders of this Church together again in a national Assembly: Yet, instead of censuring such as had made gross defection from the Lord, some were admitted into ministerial communion, and many into the office of Elders, and multitudes into full communion with the Church in her sealing ordinances,—who had taken the above-mentioned oaths and bonds, and who were deeply involved in the guilt of persecuting the Lord’s people, and in the other defections of that period of apostasy; without requiring from them any evidence of their repentance and sorrow for the same.

Thus though the Lord did wonderfully deliver us, we rendered not unto him according to the mercies received; but mingled ourselves with our enemies, and have learned of them their ways: And they have been a dead weight upon the Lord’s work and interest, ever since that time.

Our iniquities and backslidings are increased more and more: Particularly when, by the treaty of Union with England in the year 1707, we were incorporated with our neighbours in England upon terms opposite unto and inconsistent with our Covenant-union with them; in regard the maintenance of the hierarchy and ceremonies of the Church of England is made, by the said treaty, a fundamental and essential article of the Union of the two kingdoms: And thus, with our consent, the Antichristian hierarchy, and a superstitious worship in England, have all the security that human laws can give them; whereby this whole nation hath again not only given openly up with their solemn covenant-engagements to the Lord,—but also involved themselves in the guilt of consenting to, and thereby approving of the Antichristian hierarchy, and a superstitious worship in England.

Immediately after the foresaid incorporating Union, our land was made to groan under the load of unnecessary swearing, in the manifold repetition of oaths: And the nation was burdened with unlawful oaths; such as the oath of Abjuration, imposed upon all in civil and military trust,—and afterwards upon the Ministers of the Church of Scotland; which oath we acknowledge as one of our na-
tional sins and steps of defection,—in so far as the united constitution, opposite unto our Covenant-union, is thereby homologated and approven. Likewise the *sacramental test* is imposed upon the members of this Church, while serving the Sovereign in *England* and *Ireland*. Also a superstitious form of swearing is introduced amongst us, *by laying the hands upon and kissing the gospels*. Moreover the same oaths are frequently repeated upon the same day, to qualify men for different posts and offices; whereby the weight and impression of a solemn oath is ready to wear off the spirits of many. And, by all these sinful impositions and practices, our land is more and more involved in sin and guilt.

Further, a short time after the above incorporating Union, particularly in the year 1712, an almost boundless *Toleration* was granted; whereby a door was opened to gross corruption in principle, which always brings along with it looseness in practice: And in consequence of this toleration, the superstitious and corrupt worship of the Church of *England* is set up in all the corners of this land. Also, in the foresaid year, the right of *Presentation* to vacant churches, claimed by Patrons, was again restored unto them; and though patronage is contrary to our received and known principles,—yet countenance is given to this Antichristian usurpation, by the judicatories their intruding presentees upon reclaiming congregations. Likewise, the superstitious observation of *holy-days* is introduced amongst us; by the vacation of our most considerable Courts of Justice in the latter end of *December*. By all which sinful courses and practices, our land is *defiled under the inhabitants hereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.*

As our provocations, in the above instances, are great; so they have increased, and are still more grievous,—through the deep wounds that have been given unto many precious and important truths, laid down from the word of God in our Confession of Faith. Particularly, it has been vented and taught among us,—That *nothing is to be admitted*

*See the Note upon the parallel place of the *Judicial Testimony*, p. 94.*
admitted in religion but what is agreeable to reason, and
determined by reason to be so: That there are means appointed
of God for obtaining saving grace; which means, when
diligently used, with seriousness, sincerity, and faith of being
heard,—God hath promised to bless with success; and that the
going about these means in theforesaidmanner, is not above
the reach of our natural powers and abilities: That were it not
for the prospect of happiness, we could not, and therefore would
not serve God: That by the light of nature, and works of
creation and providence, including tradition; God hath given an
obscure objective revelation unto all men, of his being
reconcileable to sinners: That it is probable that none are
excluded from the benefits of the remedy for sin provided by
God, except those who, by their actual sins, exclude themselves;
and slight or reject, either the clearer light of the gospel
revealed to the Church, or that obscure discovery and offer of
grace made to all without the Church: As also, that there was
not a proper covenant made with Adam, for himself and for his
posterity; and that Adam was not a federal head to his
posterity.

Though the above gross and dangerous errors, whereby
many important truths laid down from the word of God in our
Confession of Faith are subverted, were all taught in one of our
Universities; and though they were brought before the
judicatories of this Church; and likewise, though the teacher of
them owned and maintained them in his defences at their bar:
Yet the General Assembly, in the year 1717, dismissed the
process, without censure inflicted upon the said teacher; yea,
without any particular express Testimony against the above
gross and dangerous errors. And so, as a righteous judgment
upon this Church for neglecting to vindicate injured truth, and
to censure the broacher of the above errors; the Lord permitted
him to proceed from evil to worse, even the length of impugning
the Deity of the great God our Saviour: As appears from the
process against him in the years 1727 and 1728. For it was
found evidently proven, by the Assemblies which met the said
years,—That he had vented and taught, That our Lord Jesus
Christ is not necessarily existent: That the necessary existence
of our Lord Jesus Christ is a thing we know not: That the Three
Persons of

the
the Trinity are not to be said to be numerically one in substance or essence: As also, That the terms Necessary Existence, Supreme Deity, and the title of The only true God,—may be taken in a sense that includes the personal property of the Father, and so not belonging to the Son. By which propositions the Son of God our Redeemer, and the Holy Ghost our Sanctifier, have been robbed of their true deity; and consequently of their essential glory.

Through the above-mentioned gross and dangerous propositions, this land has been the seat of pernicious errors; and of grievous blasphemy against the Persons of the adorable Trinity. But though it is to be feared, that the seed of error which hath been thus sown amongst us has taken deep root, and is bringing forth corrupt and poisonous fruits: Yet, as the judicatories of this Church have never inflicted any censure upon the teacher of the above errors, adequate to the great scandal and offence he had given; so they have not, to this very day, particularly and expressly condemned any of the above-mentioned errors, as contrary to the doctrine held forth from the word of God in our Confession of Faith,—nor have they asserted the truth, in opposition unto the terms in which it has been impugned and denied. And thus many important and precious truths have been left wounded and bleeding, without any suitable testimony given unto them.

Likewise, several other gross and dangerous errors have been vented among us; even such whereby the peculiar and supernatural operations of the Holy Spirit have been traduced, and spiritual exercise exposed and ridiculed: And such whereby the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, concerning the person and mediation of Christ, are wickedly subverted. And though several such errors have been brought to the bar of the present judicatories; yet neither is the author thereof censured, nor is there any express judicial testimony given against them. Moreover, it has been publicly asserted and maintained by him,—That the sole and universal motive to virtuous actions is self-love, interest or pleasure; whereby Self is exalted unto the throne of God. And yet the Assembly, in the year 1736, not only dismissed the publisher of this and several such gross errors without any censure inflicted upon him, or any con-
The Acknowledgment of Sins.  

Period II.

demnation of his errors: But instead of this, the Assembly admitted his explication of the article concerning self-love,—namely, *That our delight in the honour and glory of God, is the chief motive of all virtuous and religious actions;* whereby it appears, that the foresaid Assembly have *adopted* the above erroneous principle concerning self-love, as their own: In regard that the maintainer thereof does, by the above explication, still make our delight (and so our self-love, interest or pleasure) the chief motive of all virtuous and religious actions; so that hereby the great idol *Self* is still exalted and placed in the throne of God,—and the declarative glory of God is still subordinated unto self, as our chief and highest end.

Our iniquities and backslidings have also increased by the conduct of the present judicatories, in their exercising a *lordly* power and authority over the heritage of God; and by their gross perverting of the ordinance of discipline. Thus, violence has been done to the flock and heritage of God, by obtruding Ministers upon them in all corners of the land: And by exercising a *legislative* power and authority over the House of God, in making laws to his subjects contrary to his will declared in his word; as was done by the General Assembly in the year 1732, in their act anent the settlement of vacant parishes. And though this act was repealed by the Assembly in the year 1734; yet it was not repealed on account of the sinfulness thereof, but only because it was enacted contrary to some ordinary forms. Accordingly, the contrariety of the said act to the word of God, and the laudable constitutions of this Church agreeable thereto,—has never been acknowledged: Yea, vacant congregations are, to this day, settled according to the manner prescribed in the said repealed act. Likewise, the ordinance of discipline has been perverted by the Assembly in the year 1733; in appointing their Commission to inflict censures upon some Ministers merely for protesting, for their own exoneration, against a sentence of the Assembly restraining ministerial freedom in testifying doctrinally against a course of defection,—in case the said Ministers should not retract their protestation. Moreover, by an act of the said Assembly concerning the Ministers of the Presbytery of *Dunfermline*, such as cannot submit to the ministry
ministry of intruders are excommunicated from sealing ordinances; and Ministers are threatened with the highest censures of the Church, if they dispense sealing ordinances unto them: And yet the erroneous are dismissed from the bar of the judicatories, either without any censure at all, or with no due censure inflicted upon them.

Also, of late, *the Sabbath of the Lord has been publicly profaned*; by the most part of Ministers their reading the Act of Parliament anent Captain John Porteous: By which reading of that act, the alone Headship and Sovereignty of the Lord Jesus over the Church, his free and independent kingdom, was likewise practically given up*. And some of the judicatories having screened the readers of the said act, by their acts of forbearance; and none of the judicatories having censured any of them for this public scandal and offence: The whole lump of this established Church, thus leavened by suffering the leaven of this unpurged scandal to continue among them, may therefore justly be constructed to have departed from their holding of the King of Zion,—and to have subjected and subordinated their ecclesiastical meetings to the civil powers; whereby the Redeemer’s Crown has been profaned, and cast down to the ground.

Though the judicatories of this national Church have been, for a considerable time, carrying on a course of defection; yet they are so far from acknowledging their iniquity, and returning to the Lord,—that they condemn a Testimony unto the truth: And they not only refuse to lift up a Judicial Testimony for truth themselves, but they persecute others who are endeavouring to do it. Particularly, the General Assembly that met in the year 1738—condemned in bulk the Testimony emitted by the Associate Presbytery, as casting many groundless and calumnious reflections upon the said judicatories; without condescending upon any one of these which they call groundless and calumnious reflections: Whereby, instead of confessing their guilt to the glory of God,—they justify themselves, and plead that they are innocent, and refuse that they have sinned. Farther, the said Assembly impowered their Commission to libel and cite the seceding Ministers before the ensuing Assembly. Likewise, the Assembly in the

*See the Note upon the parallel place of the Declinature, p. 168, etc.*
year 1739 (even in the face of a public and open Testimony given by the Presbytery, in their Act and Declinature read in presence of the Assembly, against their course of defection and backsliding from the Lord; together with a solemn call given them, in the said Act and Declinature, to return to the Lord) did harden themselves yet more in their iniquity, by condemning this Testimony; as containing nothing but groundless prejudices against the present judicatories,—and most injurious, insolent and disrespectful expressions concerning the highest civil authority: Though the Declinature contains nothing with reference to civil authority, but a just and necessary Testimony against the above act of Parliament anent Captain John Porteous. Moreover, they recommended it to the next Assembly—to inflict the censure of Deposition upon the seceding Ministers; and afterwards, that Assembly did pretend to do so: By which procedure they have heightened and aggravated their iniquity; in regard they have thereby materially sentenced all such Ministers to deposition, who shall duly testify against the present course of defection,—which, as matters stand, cannot be done in a way of communion with the present judicatories. And we desire to lament over it before the Lord, that the present judicatories have come to such a height of defection,—that they continue to refuse all calls which are given them to return to the Lord, from whom we have (every one of us) deeply revolted.

It is also to be lamented, that a Flood of errors hath broke in upon the land; whereby the Lord’s name is dreadfully dishonoured, the doctrine of justification by grace is woefully corrupted, the proper imputation of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ for our justification before God is denied, the foundations of our holy religion overturned, thousands of precious souls destroyed, and wide steps made towards Popery and Paganism. More particularly, it is to be lamented,—that there is a dreadful prevalency of Deism; whereby all revealed religion is rejected, and the light of corrupt nature is exalted in its room: That the seed of Arianism is sown among us; whereby the true and supreme Deity of the Son of God, and of the Holy Ghost, is denied; and thus, the very foundation of
the Christian faith is unhinged: As also, that there is a general growth of Arminianism;—whereby it is maintained, that God’s act of election and reprobation depends on his foresight of the good or evil works of men; that Jesus Christ, by his death, has merited grace to all mankind; that notwithstanding of the fall, man retains a freedom of will to that which is spiritually good; that the grace of God is not irresistible and efficacious of itself; and that believers in Christ may fall totally and finally away from a state of grace. And it is farther to be lamented that, of late, some, who formerly distinguished themselves in zeal for our reformation and covenanted principles,—have turned aside to Latitudinarian, Independent and sectarian extremes; whereby the unity of the true Catholic church is denied,—and the Presbyterial order and government, the only government which Christ hath instituted in his house, is subverted: As also, the warrantableness and great design of Confessions of Faith and Catechisms, as tests of soundness in the faith, is thereby overthrown; and a wide door is opened unto a toleration of all heresy and error, under the old specious pretext of liberty of conscience. And for all these things the Lord may justly say of us,—I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright; no man repented him of his wickedness, saying what have I done? Every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle.

Together with the above-mentioned steps of defection and backsliding, a flood of profaneness and wickedness overspreads the whole land. All ranks of persons have corrupted their ways;—our nobility and gentry have, for the most part, burst the Lord’s bands asunder and cast away his cords from them; our ministers, burgesses, and commons of all sorts,—have turned away backward, and forsaken the Holy One of Israel: The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. Many heinous sins and provocations, against the first and second table of the law, are to be found amongst us: Such as gross ignorance of God, Atheism, Infidelity, profane mockings at the mysteries of religion; the holy scriptures are burlesqued, Popish errors and delusions are spreading, and the idolatrous mass is openly frequented in many corners of the land; the name of God is profaned by rash and ordinary swearing
in common conversation,—and by perjury and false swearing, especially in trade and commerce; the Lord’s day is many ways profaned, particularly by frequent and unnecessary journeying from place to place; many are without natural affection, unruly, disobedient; the land is also defiled with murders, drunkenness, prodigality and vanity in apparel, foolish jestings, rioting and wantonness,—yea, with open adulteries, and uncleanness of all sorts: And some profane and sinful customs, which have little obtained in former times, are countenanced and encouraged, both at court and in some eminent places of the nation; such as the diversions of the stage, masquerades, balls, and other such seminaries of lewedness and lasciviousness. Likewise fraud and injustice, in dealings betwixt man and man, are to be found amongst us; together with oppression, lying, envy, malice, evil-speaking, backbiting, falsehood, dissimulation,—and covetousness which is idolatry. Likewise, of late, an idolatrous picture of our Lord Jesus was well received in some remarkable cities of the nation*. As also, the penal statutes against witches have been repealed by the parliament, contrary to the express law of God: for which a holy God may be provoked, in a way of righteous judgment, to leave those who are already ensnared to be hardened more and more; and to permit Satan to tempt and seduce others, to the same wicked and dangerous snare†.

The sins and provocations of this land are farther increased,—by the kind reception that many, both ministers and people, have given to Mr George Whitefield; a professed member and priest of the superstitious church of England: And by the great entertainment that has been given to Latitudinarian tenets, as farther propagated by him and others;—whereby any particular form of church government is denied to be of divine institution; and, under a pretence of Catholic love, a scheme is laid for uniting parties of all denominations in church-communion,—in a way destructive of any testimony for the declarative glory of Immanuel as Head and King of Zion, and for the covenanted reformation of this church and land: For which

*See the note upon the parallel place of the Judicial Testimony, p. 144.
†See the note at the foot of page 164.
which a righteous God hath justly chosen their delusions, and
sent forth a spirit of delusion among them; in the present awful
work upon the bodies and spirits of men*. And though the Lord
has been pleased, in his sovereign goodness, to preserve a
remnant from being carried off by the above dangerous scheme
and awful delusion; yet, while endeavouring to testify against
the same before the world, we have not been suitably exercised
thereanent before the Lord.

*This is the work which took place about Cambuslang, and other
parts through the West of Scotland,—in the year 1742, and a year or two
afterwards; in connexion with, and among the favourers of Mr
Whitefield’s ministrations.

“The supposed converts” (as is elsewhere represented) “were
commonly all at once seized with dreadful horrors; which cast them into
long faintings and swoonings, or frightful agitations and convulsions: or
made them screech and roar, so as utterly to drown the preacher’s voice;
that he could neither be heard by themselves nor others. This condition
they continued in, some shorter and some longer: and then they were
again all of a sudden ravished with joy; transported (as they imagined)
with the clearest manifestations of God’s love, and filled with the
assurance of (what they took to be) their interest in Christ. And this faith
of theirs was attended with, or built upon imaginary Ideas of Christ; so as
some of them even imagined themselves to see him: According to the
imaginary doctrine they were instructed in; the absurd doctrine of an
imaginary Idea of Christ as man being helpful to Faith, preached and
published upon this occasion.”

And, as was expressed in an act of the Associate Presbytery for a
public Fast, (appointed July 15th, and observed August 4th, 1742); “bitter
outcryings, faintings, severe bodily pains, convulsions, visions,—are the
usual symptoms of a delusive spirit.—The promoters of this work are
going on in the same course of defection as before.—The following
fruits and effects of it are undeniably evident, viz. The warmest aversion
from and opposition to a testimony for our covenanted reformation, for
these same very principles which have been sworn to and suffered for
unto blood in these lands,—as if it were nothing but bigotry and Party-
zeal; and the closest conjunction with their ministers, though they are
continuing to bear down these principles with a high Hand,—whether
Intruders or not: Contrary to the practice of scripture converts, and the
experience of the saints of God in this land; who, upon their conversion,
still espoused the testimony of their day,—and contended for the present
truth.” And this was a principal source of that Selfish Religion which has
prevailed ever since, among the more serious members of the Established
Church; in opposition to all testimony for the truths of God, and against
the public sins of the time.
And we desire, through grace, to turn our eyes inward to our own hearts; to search and try our ways, to declare our iniquity, to be sorry for our sin, and to turn again unto the Lord. For, who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned; by our unbelief, selfishness, formality, earthliness and carnality, falling from first love, and security; by want of tenderness, watchfulness and spirituality,—in our frame and disposition, and in our walk and conversation?

And, in a particular manner, we desire to be humbled before the Lord for our contempt of the glorious gospel of the Son of God; which we acknowledge to be our sin, as it is the great sin and chief guiltiness of the land wherein we live: That we have not suitably improven it, as it is the ministration of righteousness for our justification; and as it is the ministration of the Spirit for our sanctification. We acknowledge that we are filthy and polluted; and we have it to lament over, that, in a very great measure, we have not obeyed the voice,—we received not correction, we have not trusted in the Lord, we have not drawn near to our God: We have been obstinate, our neck has been an iron sinew and our brow brass; we have dealt very treacherously, and have been transgressors from the womb. We confess our ignorance and great short-coming in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord,—in his person, offices, blessings and benefits; of the covenant of grace, as it stands fast with him; and of the way of improving Christ, and the covenant of promise.

And we desire to be humbled for our undervaluing Christ, communion with him, and his spiritual graces and blessings: That we have preferred other things so much to Christ and his interest, and have not given him the pre-eminence above all: That we have been so little exercised in meditation, searching the scriptures, self-examination, and fervent wrestling with God by prayer; these means of secret communion and fellowship with him: That we have come so far short in receiving Christ into our hearts; and improving him, as held forth by the gospel, in his fullness of grace: And that we have been much estranged from the life of faith upon the Son of God; for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. We ac- knowledge
knowledge that we have gone about to establish our own righteousness; and have not entirely rested upon his righteousness alone, as revealed to us in the gospel: Which appears, among many other things, in sinking fears, scarring to apply to Christ and the promises, and not rejoicing in Christ the propitiation,—with humility under a sense of wants, short-comings and failing in duties; which, in effect, is a degree of establishing a righteousness of our own, and not submitting to the righteousness of God: And that we have performed duties more in a legal, than in an evangelical or gospel way and manner. And we desire to be humbled for our not making use of Christ, as we ought, for sanctification; according to the promises of the covenant: As we have not acted in a way of dependence upon him, in all duties and ordinances,—and in all the performances of our common Christian calling, and of our particular lawful vocations; for direction, quickening, and strength to mortify our corruptions,—and to carry us through our Christian course, against all discouragements and temptations.

We desire to be humbled, that we have not duly made use of Christ, in approaching to the throne of grace; by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving: That, in our approaches to God, we have not had the eye of faith duly fixed upon Christ, nor offered all our service through him as we ought; and that we have not come with that humble boldness and full assurance of faith, unto God as a Father, wherewith the sacrifice and intercession of Christ have warranted us to come.

And we desire to be humbled, that we have not been duly exercised in sanctifying the Lord’s day; particularly in being careful enough to avoid carnal converse in coming to, going from, and during the intervals of public worship.

We desire to be humbled, that, in attending upon a preached gospel,—we have not had it more for our end to find communion with Christ, a taste of his goodness and excellency; and to be built up in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation: That we have not duly prepared our hearts before hand in secret, to come with godly fear and reverence, humility, spiritual hungring and thirsting
thirsting after the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof; and desiring, as new born babes, the sincere milk of the word, that we might grow thereby: That we have been so little acquainted with receiving the word, not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God: That we have not employed the Lord more to teach us inwardly, by accompanying the outward means with the effectual operations of his holy Spirit: That we have not mixed the word preached with faith, as we ought to have done; believing it with our hearts, and applying the truths preached to ourselves: And that we have not, as we ought, hid the words of Christ in our hearts, for after-improvement of them; nor employed the Spirit of Christ to bring the word we have heard to our remembrance; and have not taken due pains to meditate upon it in secret.

We desire to be humbled before the Lord, that we have not duly made use of the sacraments, as seals of the covenant of grace; and of the promises there made to us in Christ. And particularly that, in offering our children to the Lord in baptism,—we have not set ourselves, as we ought, to consider and prize the free love and grace of God; which hath prevented us and our seed, in providing such a fountain for sin and uncleanness: That we have not been suitably exercised with our own and our children’s defilement by original guilt and corruption; nor have been duly concerned that they might be regenerated, united to Christ, and get an interest in the covenant of grace and promises thereof sealed up unto them: That we have not suitably applied the covenant and promises of it to ourselves and to our seed; and this sacrament as a seal thereof: That, at the administration of this sacrament to others, we have not been exercised as we ought; by joining therein either for our own edification, or in holding up the baptized to God,—that he might bless his own ordinance to them, and receive them in amongst his children in Christ: That we have not made more conscience to make known to our children, when they came to years of capacity, their baptism,—the ends and use thereof, and the obligation thereby lying upon them, as consecrated to Christ: And that we have not duly made use of this sacra-
ment, all along the course of our life, for taking hold of God’s covenant; for furthering and strengthening the faith and comfort of our interest in God, as our God and Father in Christ,—and for strengthening through Christ, our resolutions and endeavours of mortification and newness of life.

And we desire to be humbled, that we have not been at more pains in preparation for partaking of the solemn ordinance of our Lord’s Supper,—by self-examination, meditation, prayer and supplication; and by renewed actings of faith upon the Lord Jesus Christ, for righteousness and strength: That we have not approached his holy table with spiritual hunger and thirst after Christ crucified; and with humble, broken and contrite spirits, as we ought: That we have not duly exercised ourselves in remembering the Lord’s death till he come again, and in applying the same to ourselves; for peace with God, for mortifying the body of sin, for working deep repentance and gospel sorrow on account thereof,—and for getting the love of Christ more kindled in our souls, and our hearts enlarged with greater thankfulness toward him who loved us and gave himself for us: That, through prevailing unbelief, we have too often been plunged into legal heaviness, even when partaking of this ordinance; whereas we ought especially to be rejoicing,—through faith on the propitiation in the death of Christ, so familiarly set forth thereby to us: And that after coming from the Lord’s table, we have not walked more closely with God,—either in a suitableness to the great and high privileges and mercies bestowed upon us, or the deep and solemn engagements we have there come under;—but among other misimprovements of this ordinance, and departures from the Lord, we have too often given way,—either to unbelieving discouragements under the want of sensible enjoyments, or to carnal security after being privileged with sensible attainments; and have not otherwise walked before the Lord unto all well-pleasing.

We desire to be humbled, that we have not been suitably exercised with the scandals of others, who have been the objects of Church-censures: That we have not, upon such occasions, been suitably humbled for the fountain of sin
sin in our own hearts; that we have not mourned in secret places, for the dishonour done to God by these scandals; and that we have not, as we ought, pitied and prayed for those who had fallen into the same.

And we desire to be humbled for our great *formality in prayer*, both in secret and in our families; and that we have not made more conscience of joining with our spirits, in public *prayers* and *praises*: That we have employed the spirit of grace and supplication so little; and have not duly improved this ordinance of prayer, as a means of communion with God,—and for strengthening our faith, and every other grace: And that, when we have directed our prayers to God, we have been so little employed in looking up after them for a gracious answer and return.

We desire to be humbled, that we have not walked as becometh the gospel of Christ; but have failed and come far short in the duties we owe to God, to our neighbours, and ourselves. Particularly, we desire to be humbled for our vain thoughts, our idle words, and our overliness in divine worship: That our converse has favoured so much of the earth, and so little of heaven and things above: That we have not striven to keep the thoughts of the love of Christ, and of the free grace of God in him, upon our hearts, so fresh and constant as they should be; in order to keep them watchful, tender,—zealous and enlarged for God, his honour and glory: That we have not observed and yielded unto the knockings of the Spirit; whereby Christ has offered to come into our hearts, that he might sup with us and we with him: That we have often quenched the motions of the Holy Spirit, whereby he stirreth up to duties; and stifled and put away his challenges, which tend to repentance and humiliation: That we have not been tender of his presence and consolations, to entertain the same; but have grieved him by undervaluing and refusing them, and by our careless walking without attending on his direction and guiding. And we desire to be humbled for our untenderness, in not watching duly against carnal company and converse; in not studying more to recommend religion to others,—by an holy, convincing and edifying conversation; in not studying more faithfully to watch over and admonish one another, with meekness and

love;
love; in being too ready to speak of one another’s infirmities and failings behind their backs, instead of observing the scripture-rule [Matth. xviii. 15, 16, 17.]: And that we have not duly improved spiritual company, and spiritual exercise of social prayer and conference.

As all the above sins, defections and backslidings, are highly aggravated; being committed against great gospel light,—and many remarkable appearances of God amongst us, both in a way of mercy and judgment, in former as well as in latter times; and notwithstanding of a great profession on our part, our baptismal vows,—and our indispensable engagements, by the national Covenant of Scotland and the solemn League and Covenant of the three nations: So we desire to be deeply humbled before the Lord for the same; to ly down in shame before him, confessing our iniquities,—that we with our fathers have sinned, and that we have done wickedly: And to acknowledge the Lord as righteous and holy, though he should cast us out of his sight; and send in a sword amongst us, to avenge the quarrel of his Covenant. But since the Lord is yet waiting that he may be gracious, we desire to flee unto the blood of Jesus for the remission of our own sins; and the sins of this whole covenanted Church and Land: And to pray that he may return unto us, and that he may heal our backslidings and breaches; that glory may yet dwell in our land.

And in regard it is the duty of a sinning people, not only to confess and acknowledge their iniquities, and to be humbled for them; but to take hold, by faith, of God’s gracious covenant revealed to us in the glorious gospel; avouching the Lord to be our God, according to the tenor of this his covenant,—and returning to the Lord our God, from whom we have fallen by our iniquities: And, in the faith of his free mercy through Jesus Christ, and confidence of that grace and strength promised in his covenant of mercy, to engage unto and pursue after reformation; and the advancement of the interests of the mediatiorial kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is in but not of this world,—and as subservient to which, the kingdom of Providence is committed unto him:—And being convinced in our
our minds, and confessing with our mouths, that the present and succeeding generations in this land are bound as aforesaid, by the national Covenant of Scotland and the Solemn League and Covenant of the three nations; firmly and constantly to adhere unto the doctrine, worship, presbyterial Church-government and discipline of the House of God,—laid down in his word, contained in our standards, and sworn to in these solemn Covenants:—

THEREFORE, in obedience to the command of God, conform to the practice of the godly in former times; and according to the laudable example of our worthy and religious progenitors in the foresaid Covenants:

[The ENGAGEMENT unto DUTIES.]

We all and every one of us, though sensible of the deceitfulness and unbelief of our own hearts, and however frequently perplexed with doubts and fears anent our actual believing; yet desiring to essay, in the Lord’s strength, and in obedience to his command, to glorify God,—by believing his word of grace contained in his covenant of promise; and, in the faith of his promise, to devote ourselves unto the Lord in a Covenant of Duty: WE DO, with our hands lifted up to the MOST HIGH GOD, hereby profess, and before God, angels and men, solemnly declare,—That, through the grace of God, and according to the measure of his grace given unto us, we do, with our whole hearts, take hold of the LORD JESUS CHRIST as the only propitiation for our sins; his Righteousness, as the only foundation of our access to and acceptance with God; his Covenant of free and rich promises, as our only charter for the heavenly inheritance; his Word, for our perfect and only rule of faith

and
and practice; his SPIRIT for our alone guide, to lead us unto all truth revealed in his holy word,—unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men. We avouch the LORD to be OUR GOD. And, in the strength of his promised grace, we promise and swear, by the GREAT NAME OF THE LORD OUR GOD; that we shall walk in his way, keep his judgments and commandments, and hearken to his voice: And particularly that we shall, by the Lord’s grace, continue and abide in the profession, faith and obedience of the foresaid true reformed religion,—in doctrine, worship, Presbyterial Church-government and discipline; and that we shall, according to our several stations, places and callings,—contend and testify against all contrary evils, errors and corruptions:—particularly, Popery, Prelacy, Deism, Arianism, Arminianism, and every error subversive of the Doctrine of Grace; as also, Independency, Latitudinarian Tenets, and the other evils named in the above confession of sins*.

In like manner we promise and swear, that, by all means which are lawful and warrantable for us, according to the word of God, the approved and received standards of this Church, and our known principles,—we shall, in our several stations and callings, endeavour the reformation

*This Reduplication imports a Testimony against these evils, already considered and confessed as matters of fact; and so cannot import (the absurdity of) an ascertaining or swearing to the truth of the facts,—which is supposed as out of controversy, in the previous solemn exercise of confessing the same.
mation of religion in England and Ireland; in doctrine, worship, discipline and government, according to the word of God: And to promote and advance our covenanted conjunction and uniformity in religion; Confession of Faith and Catechisms, Form of Church-government, and Directory for Worship,—as these were received by this Church.

And in regard we are taught by the word of God, and bound by our Covenants, national and solemn League,—to live together in the fear of God, and in love one to another, and to encourage one another in the work and cause of the Lord; and that, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world: Therefore, in a dependence on the Lord’s grace and strength, we in the same manner do promise and swear,—That we shall, in our several places and callings, encourage and strengthen one another’s hands in pursuing the end and design of this our solemn Oath and Covenant; and that we shall endeavour a life and conversation becoming the gospel of Christ: And that, in our personal callings and particular families, we shall study to be good examples to one another of godliness and righteousness; and of every duty that we owe to God and man: And that we shall not give up ourselves to a detestable indifferency and neutrality in the cause of God; but, denying ourselves and our own things, we shall, above all things, seek the honour of God and the good of his cause and people: And that, through grace,
forsaking the counsels of flesh and blood, and not leaning upon carnal confidences; we shall endeavour to depend upon the Lord, to walk by the rule of his word, and to hearken to his voice by his servants. In all which, professing our own weakness, we earnestly pray to God, who is the Father of mercies, through his Son Jesus Christ,—to be merciful unto us; and to enable us by the power of his HOLY SPIRIT, that we may do our duty, unto the praise of his grace in the Churches.  

Amen.

The Associate Presbytery having passed their Act for renewing our Covenants, at their meeting in Stirling on the 23d day of December 1743; they continued their said meeting till the ensuing week: And on the 28th day of that month, which was observed as a day of public fasting; all the Ministers then present did join in the Acknowledgment of Sins, and with uplifted hands in the Engagement to Duties,—before a numerous congregation*. At the same time, and in presence of the congregation, they subscribed the Engagement or Bond; as follows, viz. “We under-subscribing Ministers, members of the Associate Presbytery, do subscribe the above Bond with our hands; at Stirling, this twentieth-and-eighth day of December, One thousand seven hundred and forty-three years: The said Bond having been this day first solemnly sworn by us.”

Ebenezer Erskine, Minister at Stirling.
Ralph Erskine, Minister at Dunfermline.
James Thomson, Minister at Burntisland.
Alexr. Moncrieff, Minister at Abernethy

“Thomas

*Previous to this, they joined in [A Confession of the Sins of the Ministry, with an answerable profession of faith and engagement to duties; to be entered into by Ministers, before their renewing the Covenants.]: Which was published along with their Act for that Renovation.
“Thomas Mair, Minister at Orwel.
Ja. Fisher, Minister at Glasgow.
David Smyton, Minister at Kilmaurs.
Wm. Hutton, Minister at Stow.
Adam Gib, Minister at Edinburgh.
And. Clarkson, Minister at Craigmalien.
John Cleland, Minister at Balfron.
George Brown, Minister at Perth.
William Campbell, Minister at Ceres.
Thomas Ballantyne, Minister at Sanguhar.
David Horn, Minister at Cambusnethan.”

Four Ministers who were not then present, and another who was not then ordained,—did join, after the same manner, in that solemn work; at Falkirk, on the 14th day of March ensuing: And subscribed as follows, viz.

“James Mair, Minister at Linton.
Patrick Matthew, Minister at Midholm.
James Scott, Minister at Gateshall.
John Whyt, Minister at Dunse.
Henry Erskine, Minister at Falkirk*.”

By an Act at Edinburgh, on the 14th day of February 1744,—the Presbytery did “agree, resolve and determine; That "the renovation of the national Covenant of Scotland and the solemn League and Covenant of the three nations, in the manner now agreed upon and proposed by the Presbytery,—shall be the term of ministerial communion with this Presbytery: And likewise of Christian communion, in the admission of people to sealing ordinances; secluding therefrom all opposers, contemners and slighters of the said renovation of our Covenants. And moreover, as the Presbytery judge that much tenderness and lenity is to be used with the weakest of Christ’s flock,—who are lying open to light, and minting to come forward in the said cause; that they may not be, at first instance, secluded from sealing ordinances: So they agree that all such are to be secluded who, after "deliberate

*The last of these five subscribers—was ordained the day before. All who have been ordained since that time, had previously joined in covenaning-work.
“deliberate pains taken for their information, with all due meekness and patience,—shall be found, by the Session or superior judicatories they are in subjection unto, to be neglecters and shifters of this important moral duty; or not to be, themselves in the due use of means,—for light and satisfaction thereanent*.”

This determination the Presbytery judge “agreeable to the word of God; the principles of this Church, and the duty of the Lord’s remnant in these lands:” As a proper stand against “the grievous and growing course of defection, by the present generation in these lands,—from the truths, cause and institutions of Christ,—revealed in his holy word, and maintained in our Reformation-standards; as also the dreadful prevalence of Latitudinarian principles, for uniting persons of all denominations in Church-communion,—to the overthrow of the government of Christ’s House, and the manifest prejudice of all his precious truths.”——And (as is elsewhere expressed) “it is in reality a proper and stedfast adherence to the unerring rule of faith and manners, in opposition to the various deviations therefrom in our day,—that is, by the said act, made the term of communion; and consequently no other term of communion is thereby imposed, than what the alone Lord of the Conscience has prescribed: While the proposed renovation of our solemn Covenants is not to be considered as one particular duty—made the term of communion, exclusively of or preferably to others; but as the general and seasonable form of avouching all the principles and duties of our holy profession.”

By another Act, passed next day, [anent the Order to be observed in renewing the Covenants], the Presbytery appointed as follows, viz. “That the Solemn Acknowledgment of the public sins and breaches of our Covenants—shall be publicly joined in and made; whereupon these

“Covenants

*So far as the writer of this account knows or can remember, there has been no instance (now after the course of about thirty years) of any of the people being kept back from sealing ordinances,—for not joining in covenanting-work; while none of them have been found as is above expressed: But they have always been waited for, till willingly offering themselves; upon occasions of that solemn work, in their several congregations.
“Covenants shall be publicly sworn and subscribed, in the BOND;—by all such (in settled and vacant congregations*) as shall willingly offer themselves unto the Lord, in this solemn work and duty.” And “that none shall be admitted to swear or subscribe the Covenants, but such as have a competent measure of knowledge,—are free of all known scandal, and have a conversation becoming the gospel; as these only can make a credible profession of willingly offering themselves unto the Lord, in this work.”

P.S. Covenanting-work was accordingly gone about in two congregations (of Abernethy and Ceres), the ensuing summer. But the question which occurred soon afterwards, about the religious clause of some Burgess-oaths,—put a stop to further progress of that work, (except at Dunfermline in summer 1746); till some time after the Breach of the Associate Synod, in the year 1747. The solemn work was then carried forward, in the several congregations of those Ministers who held fast their profession at the said breach; as also in many other congregations, which have since come gradually to be settled: And the work has been several times gone about, in the generality of settled congregations,—in some, six or seven times; not repeatedly by the same persons, but by new persons who offered themselves upon repeated occasions.

That solemn work has thus taken place, according to the substance,—but with variations, as to the circumstances of the order proposed in the aforesaid Act: And after the manner which is represented in the following particulars, viz.

1st, As Covenanting-work is always gone about on days of solemn fasting and humiliation; so it is, commonly, on the fast-days before sacramental occasions: All who join in it being to communicate on the ensuing Sabbath; and, in some places, each receiving a token immediately upon their subscribing the Bond.

2dly, Public intimation is made of the solemn work proposed, a considerable time (four, five, or six Sabbaths) before

*So far as the Writer of this account knows or can remember, there has been but one instance (at Jedburgh) of going about this work in a vacant congregation.
before hand: And various meetings of Session are held in the mean time,—for conversing with and receiving such as offer themselves to join.

3dly. On the day appointed, the Minister of the place is assisted,—commonly by two or more of his brethren; and then the work proceeds in the following manner, viz.

1. After praise and prayer, a sermon is preached,—commonly by the Minister of the place; followed with prayer and praise.

2. The Minister of the place then takes notice of the solemn work to be proceeded unto; and, after prayer, he reads out the names of those who are to join,—all of them being properly seated together.

3. The *National Covenant* is first read*, and then the *Solemn League and Covenant*; commonly by the Minister of the place.

4. The assisting Ministers then read the *Acknowledgment of Sins*, (as also the *Engagement to Duties*, as preparatory to the engaging in it); and that in several divisions (into four, five, or six parts), by turns: Each commonly beginning with a short prayer.

5. There is next a prayer of solemn Confession and Supplication, commonly by the Minister of the place; followed with praise.

6. The oath of the *Bond* is then administred, by the Minister of the place; all the people who join standing up, and holding up their right-hands,—upon a sign given, by the Minister’s lifting up his right-hand, at the words of the Bond which import so much: And he concludes this part of the work, by an exhortation to the Covenanters,—followed with prayer and praise†.

7. The subscribing of the Bond is hereupon proceeded unto‡, (such as cannot write taking the pen into their hands,

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*This is meant of the *National Covenant* as it was entred into in the years 1580 and 1581, without the *Bond* wherein it was renewed in the year 1638; agreeably to the example of our Reformers then, who renewed it in a new Bond suited to their circumstances.

†In some places, after administering the Bond,—all present who had formerly joined in it, and are to be admitted to the Lord’s Table on the following Sabbath, do (on being called to do so) testify their adherence by lifting up their right-hands.

‡Sometimes, from the numerousness of those who join, the subscribing has been after a sermon on the following day. The subscriptions are attested
hands, and giving it to the Clerk to subscribe for them); with
turns of exhortation and praise, in the time of subscribing: All
which is followed with prayer and praise. And the work of the
day is concluded with a sermon: After some interval, where
there is time for it; as in the entry of the work.

N.B. Women, as well as men are admitted to swear and
subscribe the Bond. And this is conformable to scripture
example, in the 10th chapter of Nehemiah; as is fully made out
by the eminent Mr Boston, in his very valuable Tractatus
Stigmologicus.——According to the last verse of the preceding
chapter, the Covenant there mentioned was one; but one, as to
the matter and form of it: Yet, according to the 1st verse of this
chapter, (as on the margin, and more clearly in the original),
there were sealings,—a number of sealed deeds or copies of that
same covenant; answerable to the case of the great multitude,
who had to seal or subscribe the same. In the first 27 verses,
there is a particular roll of many chief persons in the
multitude,—who sealed or subscribed: And, according to the
28th verse, this was with the concurrence of the rest of the
people,—particularly their wives, their sons and their
daughters; every one having knowledge, and having
understanding. Of these it is said, in the 29th verse, that they
clave to their brethren who had subscribed: Not merely by a
general declaration of adherence; but by entering into the Oath,
and sealing or subscribing the same along with them. For the
words which are rendered they clave to their brethren, do
properly and literally signify,—they apprehended or took hold;
over, or after their brethren. These words, as it were, point out
the case of that company, male and female; as they were
crouding in upon their brethren of a public character who had
sealed,—to take hold of the copies after them, and to seal or
subscribe in the same manner.

Step

attested by the Minister of the place; with concurrence of the Session-
clerk, or some of his brethren then present.
Step  V.

The ANSWERS to Mr Nairn, with the DECLARATION and DEFENCE subjoined.

THOUGH the Step now under consideration—was taken about three months before the final passing of the Act for renewing our Covenants: Yet having been taken about eleven months after the first passing thereof,—and having been also wholly occasioned by, and consequential upon that Step; it therefore comes properly to be considered in the last place.

The first passing of the Act for renewing our Covenants, was by the unanimous vote of all present excepting Mr Nairn. What he demurred upon was a paragraph in the Acknowledgment of Sins,—confessing the evil of the Anti-government scheme which some, formerly in accession to the Presbytery, had espoused; of the tenor following, *viz.* [“As we desire to be humbled before the Lord for the national apostasy, under which the Lord’s remnant through the land have been groaning; while our rulers have not only neglected but contradicted their duty, of espousing and supporting the covenanted principles and reformation of this church,—whereby they have greatly provoked the Lord to anger: So we desire to be humbled for the dangerous extreme that some have gone into, of impugning the present civil authority over these nations and subjection thereunto in lawful commands,—on account of the want of those qualifications which Magistrates ought to have, according to the word of God and our Covenants; even though they allow us in the free exercise of our religion, and are not manifestly unhinging the liberties of the kingdom;—an opinion and practice contrary to the plain tenor of scripture, and to the known principles of this church in her confession and covenants,—and of all other reformed churches: And that some few carry their zeal against the defections and evils of the times, to the dangerous extreme of espousing principles in favours of propagating religion by offensive arms; quite contrary to that disposition which ought to be in all the professed fol-“lowers

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"lowers of Christ,—who came not to destroy men’s lives, but to save them."

At the next meeting of Presbytery, Mr Nairn gave in a paper of dissent from the above paragraph: and when they were again met, he dictated a representation and petition upon the subject to their Clerk; after which (at the next sederunt) he gave in a paper of dissent and secession from them.——At this meeting, and previous to the steps then taken by him, the Presbytery agreed to leave out that paragraph; translating it into a separate Act, by which they condemned the dangerous extremes therein mentioned. And the reason of their so leaving it out was,—“in regard they had formerly agreed, That it was not suitable to their present circumstances, to blend civil and ecclesiastic matters in the oath of God in renewing the covenants; because that the cognizance of civil affairs belongs not properly to them as a church-judicatory: And some members being of the mind, That the reduplication of the oath upon that clause of the confession of sins, which was the occasion of the dissent,—would, upon the matter, account to the foresaid blending*.”

A committee of the Presbytery having prepared a draught of answers to Mr Nairn, and of the declaration and defence subjoined; and these answers having been considered at some precedent meetings: The Presbytery spent a meeting of three weeks at Stirling, upon the declaration and defence; beginning on the 14th and ending on the 29th of September 1743. The draught was then approved of by a vote: And, according to their appointment, it was soon after published; under the following title, viz.

[ANSWERS

*Two Ministers of the Presbytery (different from Mr Nairn) were of this mind. But the Presbytery did not judge, that there could be any such blending of civil and ecclesiastic matters by the foresaid reduplication; where the Magistrate was not a party engaged unto: While all our duty toward the civil government, according to our professed principles, must be understood as comprehended among the other duties of the moral law,—even where God only is the party engaged unto, as in the Bond for renewing our Covenants.——A formal clause of allegiance in the Bond, would indeed amount to that blending of civil and ecclesiastic matters which is mentioned. For such a clause in the nature of the thing, could not but respect the Magistrate as a party engaged unto.
Period II. Of the Manner of renewing our Covenants. 259

[ANSWERS by the Associate Presbytery,—to Reasons of Dissent given in to the said Presbytery, at Stirling, December 23d 1742; as also the Representation and Petition dictated to their Clerk, and Reasons of Dissent and Secession given in to them,—at Edinburgh, Feb. 3d 1743;—by the Reverend Mr Thomas Nairn, Minister of the Gospel at Abbotshall: Together with a DECLARATION and DEFENCE of the Associate Presbytery’s Principles, anent the present civil government]. And the substance of the whole comes now to be represented.

It is reducible to two general heads, upon which Mr Nairn’s quarrel with the Presbytery was chiefly stated; their manner of Renewing our Covenants, and their principles about the present civil government; Which are to be distinctly represented.

Head I. Concerning the Presbytery’s Manner of Renewing our Covenants.

I. Mr Nairn alledged,—that the form and manner which the Presbytery proposes is not, and cannot in any sense be called a renewing of the Covenants; but really a taking a quite different Oath or Covenant, under pretence of renewing the old Covenants. If this were true, he would indeed have good ground to differ from the Presbytery; and he might well charge them with great abuse and imposition upon the people. But then, what reason doth he produce for that allegiance? It just comes to this, That the Presbytery are for using a new form; they are not for confining themselves to a repetition of the form, or of the same words and phrase wherein the Covenants were conceived by our ancestors: Thus, the difference which he complains of betwixt the form and manner proposed by the Presbytery, and our former Covenants,—is such as appears in the reading and comparing of them; that is, a difference in form, or in words and phrase. The use of the same form, or of the same words and phrase, is that only which Mr Nairn (if his language here has any sense) admits to be a renewing of our Covenants. This is what he insists for; and the doing otherwise is that for which he so heavily blames the Presbytery.

Now,
Now, in answer unto all this, the Presbytery proposes to manifest these five things following: (1.) That the method of renewing the Covenants which Mr Nairn insists for, against the Presbytery, is very unreasonable. (2.) That it is quite absurd and impracticable. (3.) That therein Mr Nairn is inconsistent with himself. (4.) That it is quite unprecedented in the Church. (5.) That the form and manner proposed by the Presbytery—is really a renewing our solemn Covenants, according to the example of our reformers. And if these things be once made out, the Presbytery will be sufficiently vindicated against all the noise Mr Nairn makes about their pretended abuse and imposition upon people.—It is proposed then to manifest, 1st, That the method of renewing the Covenants, which Mr Nairn insists for against the Presbytery, is very unreasonable. And this it is upon the accounts following, viz.

1. That we should be obliged and confined unto a repetition of the same form or words wherein our Covenants were conceived in the last century, would necessarily require and suppose one of two things: Either,

   (1.) That these words (abstracting from the meaning and matter) have a stamp of divine authority upon them: But this belongs only unto the words of the Holy Ghost in the Scriptures. Yea, the adherence which Mr Nairn pleads for, unto the words of our Covenants,—is greater than the adherence that God requires of us, unto the original inspired language of Scripture; for we are warranted to have the Scriptures translated into our own language, which is an accommodation of them to the circumstances of such as are ignorant of the original languages: And if, in retaining the meaning, matter and truths of Scripture, we may clothe the same in new words that will suit our circumstances; How unreasonable must it be to restrain us from using a necessary freedom with the form or words of our Covenants, for accommodating them to our present circumstances?

   But, on the other hand,

   (2.) Our confinement unto a repetition of the words wherein our Covenants were formerly conceived, would suppose that our first covenanter swore an adherence,— not
not only unto the things and duties expressed in our Covenants, but also unto their own words wherein they expressed them: So as the oath, which we ly under in their loins, should bind us now unto the words as much as unto the matter; or to reckon the words of that oath part of the matter of it, whereunto we are sworn. But what can appear more ridiculous and false, than a supposition of this kind? Yea, as that oath did not bind posterity unto the duties therein mentioned, any other way than what might suit the circumstances God should place them in; How then could an adherence unto the words of that oath be any farther requisite?——But

2. That we should be confined unto a repetition of these words, in renewing the Covenants, is most unreasonable. Because, thus, our reformers were at liberty to enter into covenant with God in a way suited unto their circumstances, and the then special calls of God’s word and providence. But we must be denied a like liberty: That is, in covenaniting with God, we must overlook our present circumstances, and the present special calls of God’s word and providence; and regard only what was the case an hundred years ago,—in repeating still that form of a covenant which did quadrate unto that case, but does not quadrate unto ours. Again, is the accommodating the Covenants to our case a thing that our reformers could do for us, and save us the trouble of; though they were ignorant of our case? Or could what they did supercede and annul our duty to deal with God in a covenant-way, suited unto God’s present calls and manner of dealing with us? Is not then what Mr Nairn insists for most unreasonable? Moreover,

2dly, It is quite absurd and impracticable.

Here several expressions in our Covenants might be mentioned, which can noway hit our present condition; and an application of which unto the same would be very absurd: But, passing these, as obvious unto an intelligent reader; it is to be farther remarked, that,

1. The repetition insisted for is quite absurd: Because it must, upon the matter, say,—That our reformers did, of purpose, calculate the form of their Covenant, not only for the special circumstances and calls by word and provi-
Of the Manner of renewing our Covenants.

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dence which then took place, but also for these that should take
place even an hundred years after; though yet our reformers
neither foresaw our present condition,—nor could they, or were
they bound to make provision for it.

2. A renewing covenant, by repeating the ancient form, as
Mr Nairn would have it,—is quite impracticable. For though
we should pronounce the same form and words, yet we behoved
necessarily to understand it of the present time, persons and
things; otherwise it could not be a present oath. But though we
should retain the words,—if we mean them not of the time,
persons and things, that our forefathers had ado with; but of
these which we have ado with; then, in so far, we pronounce the
words with a different meaning from what our forefathers had:
and so this could not be a renewing of the Covenants in Mr
Nairn’s strict sense; unless he wants a renovation of words, not
of their meaning. Again,

3dly, In what Mr Nairn now insists for, he is inconsistent
with himself. For, as his present language has no sense, unless
he be pleading for a renewing the Covenants in a repetition of
the ancient form and words; yet he wants the Covenants to be
renewed in a way suited to our circumstances: And how can
these things consist?—Moreover, that accommodation of the
Covenants to our present circumstances which he pleads for,
must be in one or both of these two ways. Either,

1. The same words must be used; but understood of the
present time, persons and things: And then, the words are used
with another special view than what our forefathers had. But is
it not fully as lawful to make use of other words than they, as to
use their words with another special view than they had? Again,
seeing we must have a special view to the present time,
persons and things,—Is it not far better to express the same in
our own words, than to go back an hundred years and seek
words for it from our forefathers; who could not foresee the
same, and who were not bound to suit the Covenants unto our
case but unto their own? Thus, if Mr Nairn once loose a pin of
his scheme, by allowing us to have our own views according to
our present circumstances; by a parity
of reason, we cannot be hindered from having our own words also. But,

2. By accommodating the Covenants to our present circumstances, Mr Nairn may also mean a doing it “with an exception of some particulars, where there must be an alteration of the phrase.” And this is what he positively advances in his Petition. There he proposes an example of the exception and alteration he is for, viz. as in the renovation of the Covenants at Auchinshaugh near Douglas, July 24th 1712. In the printed copy of the Covenants as there renewed, there are some alterations signified upon the margin; and particularly, these places that respect the Civil Magistrate—are explained away from any Magistrate that actually is, and applied to a Magistrate that (perhaps only) may be some time or other. It is not the Presbytery’s business here, to give a judgment anent the manner wherein the Covenants were then renewed; nor particularly, anent the suitableness of calling the Great GOD solemnly to witness the fidelity of a people unto a Magistrate that had no being in the world.—But what must be farther noticed here, is this; That in accommodating the Covenants to our circumstances, Mr Nairn is for allowing some exception and alteration of the phrase. Now here he has fairly broke the ice: for it is a known maxim, that majus et minus non variant speciem; degrees of a thing alter not the nature of it. And thus it is the same thing, as to the general nature of it, which both he and the Presbytery here plead for, viz. the renewing of the Covenants with alterations suited to our circumstances; only he is for one manner and degree of alteration, and the Presbytery for another: And how comes he to have a right of prescribing so many alterations as he thinks fit; and of crying out, at the same time, against the Presbytery, if they offer to use any freedom of this kind? If Mr Nairn acted consistently with himself, in his present plea against the Presbytery’s accommodation of the Covenants to our circumstances, as if this were no renewing of them at all; then he should have refused all manner of alterations: But, while he doth not so,—the only question here then is,—Whether he or the Presbytery shall determine the manner and degree of alteration that must be made?

4thly,
4thly, What Mr Nairn presently insists for, is altogether unprecedented in the Church.

For manifesting this it may be proper, in the first place, to take a view of the practice of the Church of Israel in making and renewing covenants. We have several instances of covenants of duties betwixt God and that people, viz. at Horeb, [Exod. chap. xix.]; in the land of Moab, [Deut. chap. xxix.]; in the days of Asa, [2 Chron. chap. xv.]; in the days of Johoiada, [chap. xxiii.]; in the days of Hezekiah, [chap. xxix.]; in the days of Josiah, [chap. xxxiv.]. In the days of Ezra, [Ezr. chap. x.]; and in the days of Nehemiah, [Neh. chap. ix. and x.]. Now, we find not any one instance that Israel, in renewing covenant, did, at any time, repeat the form and words of a former covenant; yea, it is plain they never did: Though we have instances of their acknowledging and mourning over the breach of former covenants. Yet will Mr Nairn venture to say, That Israel never renewed their covenants; or, That, when they entered of new into a covenant,—they thereby did bury, sôpite and destroy former covenants? This indeed is the native consequence of Mr Nairn’s scheme.—

But, again, let the practice of the reformed Church of Scotland be considered; and it will appear that what Mr Nairn inspects for, is altogether unprecedented therein.

In the years 1580 and 1581, the Confession of Faith, or National Covenant, was first sworn and subscribed by persons of all ranks. This Covenant was renewed in the year 1590: And though then nine years only had elapsed after the first swearing of that Covenant; yet, for accommodating the same to their circumstances at that time, a general Bond was added thereto,—containing a distinct oath, as to the form and words of it.

Afterwards, in the year 1638, when our reformers renewed the National Covenant; they saw meet to lay aside the general Bond added thereto, and which had been nationally sworn and subscribed anno 1590: And they framed and added a new Bond or Oath, different in form and words from any former. (Which new bond, as the National Covenant is printed along with our Confession of Faith, begins in the second paragraph after the specification of
of Acts of Parliament; which acts *themselves* were however no part of the preamble to the new bond, far less any part of that oath itself). And the said Bond, as having the foresaid national Covenant prefixed to it,—was sworn and subscribed by persons of all ranks in the year 1638, and afterwards. Thus, the national Covenant, as first framed and sworn *anno* 1580, was not separately subscribed *anno* 1638; but as prefixed unto the foresaid new Bond. And why our reformers did not then also prefix the Bond that had been sworn and subscribed *anno* 1590,—there is one reason declared in a *Protestation* that was read and taken at the Cross of *Edinburgh* by our covenanters, *September* 22d 1638. And it is thus expressed in the 13th Reason of the Protestation, *viz*. “The general Bond—containeth many clauses not so *fitting* the *present time* as that wherein it was subscribed.” But the *National Covenant*, or Confession of Faith, did very well fit that time; wherein such methods were on foot for the introduction of Popery: Though the circumstances of that time did require the new Bond also to be added.

But it is farther to be observed here,—that the *National Covenant*, as it had been sworn *annis* 1580 and 1590, was *no part* of the oath which was sworn *anno* 1638; it was only part of the preamble unto that oath. And,

1. This is evident from the Covenant itself. For, besides that the *new Bond* is in itself a complete oath, not part of an oath: It is to be farther observed, that, in that part of the preamble which immediately proceeds the new Bond,—the foregoing National Covenant, or Confession of Faith, is called the *Confession of Faith above-written*; not above sworn, or above subscribed. Again, in the close of the preamble, they call it *the foresaid National Oath and Subscription*; which the *present and succeeding generations in this land are bound to keep inviolable*: And thus they speak of it as an oath that before had been nationally sworn and subscribed, so as it still continued binding. And they speak of the then present and succeeding generations as bound thereby in the same manner; that is, that they were both bound by it as a Covenant formerly sworn and subscribed, and which was now brought into the preamble of the new Bond. Again, 

2. Our
2. Our reformers considered and spoke of this new Bond, as a covenant distinct from the former covenant (viz. in form and words, not in the general matter and design); and thus they called it The late Covenant, Our Covenant, Our Confession of Faith and Covenant.—For evidence of this, the Presbytery refers to a Paper printed at Aberdeen, anno 1638; which is entitled,—Answers of some Brethren of the Ministry, to the Replies of the Ministers and Professors of Divinity in Aberdeen, concerning the late Covenant: And, in the preamble to the first Answer, when speaking of the old national Covenant and the new Bond, they call them our late and preceding Covenants. Moreover, the Presbytery refers unto the Protestation printed anno 1638, entitled,—“The Protestation of the Noblemen, Barons, Gentlemen, Burrows, Ministers and Commons, subscribers of the Confession of Faith and Covenant, lately renewed within the kingdom of Scotland; made at the Market-cross of Edinburgh, the 22d of September 1638.” In that Protestation there are several passages to the purpose in hand; the Presbytery shall name the following. In the close of the 6th Preliminary, speaking of the Bond then framed,—they call it our late Covenant and Confession, descending more specially to the errors and novations of the time. Again, in the 4th Reason of protest, they refuse to prefer the general Confession (viz. the former national Covenant) unto this, which necessarily was now made more special. And, in the 5th Reason, they call the national Covenant prefixed to their Bond the former Covenant; and their Bond they call our Confession of Faith and Covenant.—Again, the Presbytery refers unto a public Paper, printed anno 1638; which is entitled, Reasons against the rendering of our sworn and subscribed Confession of Faith. And, in Reason 4th, they speak of that late Confession or Covenant, as what was “according to the laudable example of our religions progenitors; who, by the LIKE OATH” (viz. the former Confession and Covenant) “have obliged us to the substance and tenor of THIS.”

But, not to multiply instances, from what has been said it appears,—that the Bond which was framed anno 1638, was, in its form and words, a new and distinct Confession of Faith and Covenant, and a separate oath; whereof the former
former Confession and Covenant was not a part, but a part of
the preamble thereunto. And this manner wherein our
reformers, anno 1638, renewed the former Covenant,
accommodating it to their circumstances,—is an exact
precedent for the manner of renewing the Covenants, which the
Presbytery have in view; as shall be farther noticed. But what
precedent is there here for that repetition of the old form and
words, which Mr Nairn insists for? even none at all, but the
contrary,—

It is farther to be observed, that, when the solemn League
and Covenant was renewed anno 1648; as this was but five
years after it was first sworn and subscribed in Scotland,—so
there had not been any such change of their circumstances in
that short time, as either required or admitted a laying aside the
first form of the solemn League and Covenant: Yet, for hitting
what was new in their circumstances, they renewed the same
with a solemn Acknowledgment of Sins and Engagement to
Duties, which was framed at that time. And thus, still, Mr
Nairn has no precedent for his way.

Further, as hath been formerly noticed,—Mr Nairn
proposes the renovation of the Covenants at Auchinshaugh near
Douglas, July 24th 1712, as a precedent to walk by: But even
here, he wants a proper precedent for his present scheme. Mr
Nairn speaks not of following any thing new in that example,
farther than in an exception of some particulars where there
must be an alteration of the phrase; and that can only respect
the notes on the margin of the printed copy of the Covenants as
then renewed. But, moreover, when the Covenants were
renewed at that time, there was framed a new Acknowledgment
of Sins and Engagement to Duties; consisting now of about six
sheets of paper in small print; and the Covenants were then
sworn and subscribed expressly conform to the explication and
application thereof—in the said Acknowledgment of Sins and
Engagement to Duties. And thus Mr Nairn has no precedent
here, that will carry him out in his present scheme.

But, the Presbytery proceeds to manifest,

5thly, That the form and manner proposed by them, which
Mr Nairn so heavily condemns,—is really a renew
ing of our solemn Covenants, according to the example of our reformers.

1. The manner which they propose is really a renewing of our solemn Covenants.—Mr Nairn indeed makes use of a popular enough argument, when he cries out against the Presbytery as abusing and imposing upon the people in this matter. He admits of nothing to be a renewing our Covenants, but what consists in repeating or saying over again the ancient form and words thereof: But this indeed is what the Presbytery never proposed, what they never had a view of putting upon the people. However, the manner of renewing the Covenants, which is expressed in their overture thereanent,—is really, and without any the least dissimulation, a renewing of these Covenants; as appears from the following considerations.

(1.) The Presbytery has not the least objection against the old form of our Covenants, as very suitable unto the time wherein they were framed; they only plead for alterations of the form, suitable unto our present circumstances.

(2.) Once and again, in the confession of Sins, and preamble to the Bond, and also in the Bond itself,—they expressly acknowledge, profess and declare the perpetual obligation of our Covenants, national and solemn League.

(3.) The sins mentioned are acknowledged, not only as breaches of the holy law of God,—but expressly as breaches also of our solemn Covenants. Again, The duties mentioned are engaged to, not only as binding by the law of God,—but expressly as binding also by the foresaid Covenants. Again,

The duties mentioned are engaged to, not only as binding by the law of God,—but expressly as binding also by the foresaid Covenants. Thus the title which the Presbytery gives unto the Confession and Bond is, “A solemn Acknowledgment of the public Sins and breaches of the same (viz. of our Covenants); and a solemn Engagement unto the Duties contained in them.”

(4.) The Covenants themselves, in their ancient form and language, are prefixed to the new Bond; as part of the preamble thereunto.

Now, here is a plain and express renovation of the whole matter and meaning of our Covenants, in an accommodation to our circumstances. And as our Covenants are to be considered as an obligation; so an obligation
cleaves properly to the matter and meaning, not to the bare words. Thus, what the Presbytery proposes is just, in words suited to our circumstances, a solemn avouching; not only an obligation which the law of God lays upon us, but an obligation laid on us also by our Covenants: And this done in an oath, in words to the same purpose, suited to our circumstances, is properly a renewing of our Covenants. How then could Mr Nairn venture to say, That this could, in no sense, be called a renewing of them? What more could he have said, though the Presbytery had framed a Confession and Bond, bearing no relation to or mention of our Covenants; and though they were acknowledging sins not as breaches of covenant, and engaging to duties not as already binding by covenant? But the case is quite otherways. And so here there is proposed a plain renovation of our Covenants, in every imaginable sense; excepting that of confining ourselves to a repeating by oath the form and words, the letter and sounds, wherein our Covenants were expressed an hundred years ago. But this is what the Presbytery have already manifested to be unreasonable, absurd, impracticable, unprecedented,—and so utterly inconsistent with a renovation of the Covenants agreeably to our present circumstances; as herein also Mr Nairn is inconsistent with himself. Again,

2. This manner of renewing the Covenants, which the Presbytery proposes, is according to the example of our reformers. For,

As the Assembly, anno 1648, appointed the renovation of the solemn League,—with a new Acknowledgment of Sins and Engagement to Duties; this is just what the Presbytery proposes.

Again, as our reformers, anno 1638, renewed the national Covenant,—by framing a new Bond engaging to covenanted duties, and swearing this Bond as having the former national Covenant prefixed to it; so this is just what the Presbytery proposes.

Moreover, for manifesting yet farther the exact agreement betwixt this method of renewing the Covenants—and the practice of our reformers at that time,

(1.) The Presbytery refers unto a Paper printed at Aberdeen, anno 1638; entitled, General Demands concerning the
the late Covenant: And unto another Paper, printed at Aberdeen the same year; entitled, Answers to the Replies of the Ministers and Professors of Divinity in Aberdeen, concerning the late Covenant. There we find the Ministers and Professors of Divinity in Aberdeen objecting against the late Covenant, or the new Bond that had been sworn; particularly, That it was substantially different from that which was subscribed by the King and his subjects annis 1580 and 1581. And, in the Answer to the first demand, it is replied,—That the sound interpretation and application thereof to the errors of our times, can make no substantial change. Again, in answer to the first Reply, it is observed,—That a sound interpretation of the Covenant, although proceeding from a private person and altogether void of external authority, cannot make a substantial difference. Thus we see, our reformers did not plead that the Covenant, as renewed by them anno 1638, was the same with the former Covenant in form and words; but that it was substantially the same: Which is just what the Presbytery pleads, in the present case.

(2.) The Presbytery refers unto a public paper formerly cited; entitled, Reasons against the rendering of our sworn and subscribed Confession of Faith. The King pressed the covenanters to render, or give up the Covenant or new Bond they had sworn; and in the 4th Reason for not rendering it, they observe, (as above cited) —that our religious progenitors, by the like oath, have obliged us to the SUBSTANCE and TENOR of this. And so the Bond framed by the Presbytery is proposed to be sworn, as that unto the SUBSTANCE and TENOR whereof our religious progenitors have obliged us by a like oath.

(3.) The Presbytery refers unto the public Protestation formerly cited. The King, by a proclamation, anno 1638, required the Covenant to be renewed by all ranks; in a repetition of the same form and words wherein it had been renewed anno 1590. Thus, we see that the debate the Presbytery now has with Mr Nairn,—is not altogether new: Our reformers had such another debate with the King, when he made the above proclamation: But they protested against the same; and, in the reasons of protest, they express several things to the case in hand. Some passages
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passages in that protestation, that cast light upon the present case,—have been already cited, and shall not be repeated. It may be observed farther, that our reformers there plead, That the Bond newly framed and sworn by them—was a necessary explication and application of the former Covenant to their circumstances; that it was substantially the same with the former, and but a renovation of the former. Thus, in the 5th article of protest, comparing their new Bond with the former Covenant,—they call it the necessary explication and application thereof already sworn by us. Again, in reason 6th, speaking of their late Confession of Faith or Covenant, they thus proceed: “What is the use of March-stones upon borders of lands, the like use hath Confessions of Faith in the kirk, to disternimate and divide betwixt Truth and Error; and the renewing and applying of Confessions of Faith to the present errors and corruptions, are not unlike riding of marches. And, therefore, to content ourselves with the general, and to return to it from the particular application of the Confession,—necessarily made, upon the invasion or creeping in of errors within the borders of the kirk; if it be not a removing of the March-stone from the own place, it is, at least, the hiding of the march in the ground that it be not seen; which, at this time were very unreasonable.” Moreover, in reason 11th, speaking anent the sameness of the former national Covenant,—and the then Bond renewing the same; they plead that there is “no substantial difference between that which we have subscribed, and the Confession subscribed in the year 1580: More than there is between that which is hid and that which is revealed, a March-stone hid in the ground and uncovered, between the hand closed and open, between a sword sheathed and drawn.”

Thus, we find the plea our reformers managed against the King; in defending their late Covenant as substantially the same with, and so a necessary manner of renewing the former: And it is, in so far, just such another plea which the Presbytery now have with Mr Nairn. And it is remarkable, that, when our reformers renewed the national Covenant,—by framing and swearing a new bond,
different in form and words from the former; they actually considered this as a precedent to be followed by posterity in the manner of renewing the Covenant. For, in the 5th reason of protest, they refuse to satisfy themselves with the old form and words of the Covenant,—and so to lay aside the new form and words whereinto they had put it; ‘Because this would (say they) precondemn also the like laudable course in the like necessity, to be taken by the posterity.’

After all then, can there be any thing plainer,—than that the method of renewing the Covenants which the Presbytery proposes, is really a renewing of them, without dissimulation: And that it is exactly agreeable to the example of our reformers; yea, just such a method as they expected posterity was to take?

II. Mr Nairn complains, that a swearing to endeavour the extirpation of Popery and Prelacy—is altogether omitted in this present Oath or Covenant.—But there is an express abjuration of and engagement against Popery and Prelacy,—in the Bond as it presently stands. As for the Presbytery’s not using there the word [extirpation]; it is well enough known that that word has been, of late years, abused to a sanguinary sense, for propagating religion by offensive arms;—quite contrary to the mind of our reformers: nor are we so situate as our reformers, in having the concurrence of civil powers for managing necessary and lawful process against malignants. And therefore it is necessary that the Presbytery make use of words, in this case, expressing the same matter; in a way opposite to present errors, and agreeable to our present circumstances.

III. He complains that, as to the civil part of the above Covenants, it is altogether omitted. Now, what can Mr Nairn mean by this complaint? One would think, from these words, that he were condemning the Presbytery,—for not applying the civil part of our Covenants to the present King and government. But this cannot be his meaning, because himself is contending against the lawfulness of such an application. Well then, Mr Nairn grants,—that the Covenants are to be sworn with application to our present circumstances, (as indeed otherwise they could not become our oath): But he is utterly against applying the civil
civil part of the covenants to our present circumstances; that is, the understanding it of the present King and government. Thus, a chief thing he is now contending for, all along,—is to drop and explode any present meaning of the civil part; he is for swearing the civil part, only as declaring and avouching his principles and duty with respect to some Magistrate that may afterwards (and perhaps never) be. But this is only a prophetical meaning he gives to the words; which is inconsistent with the tenor of the words, and with the nature of the oath. It is soon enough to avouch one's principles and duty anent a Magistrate, when once that Magistrate has a being in the world: No body can have God's call to do so sooner; for God never calls to any duty, till he gives occasion for the discharge of it,—that is, till it be an actual duty.

Now when, after all, Mr Nairn finds fault with omitting the civil part, in renewing our Covenants; the sense cannot be, that he condemns the leaving out any present meaning of the civil part, (for this is the same thing he himself contends for): but the sense must be, That he condemns the not retaining and repeating the bare words of the civil part, as stript of any present meaning or sense at all. Thus, he is for exploding the meaning, and extolling the words; and he dissents and secedes from the Presbytery, because they will not do so too: A singular step indeed! Common sense tells that words are of no consequence at all, without some present sense: And if Mr Nairn acted consistently, when he is for omitting the meaning of the civil part; he would be for omitting the words too: But while he is zealous for the words, and against their meaning; let the world judge if any zeal can be more blind, absurd and ridiculous.

The plain case is, The Covenants were entered into and frequently renewed by the interposition of the civil authority as well as the ecclesiastic. But as there is no interposition at present of civil authority, in the renewing of the Covenants; so the Presbytery reckon it improper for them, to meddle in these matters that are of a civil nature, [or to apply the civil part of our Covenants—as an oath of allegiance to the present King and government]: And therefore they could do nothing this way, in their accommodation of the Covenants to the present time.
If Mr Nairn means, that the Presbytery cannot renew the Covenant-oath of allegiance to the present government; this is what they grant, because it is not competent for them to impose oaths in civil matters: Though if the civil government, in a way of supporting reformation, were again imposing the same allegiance; they would have abundance of freedom to take it.

Head II. Concerning the Presbytery’s Principles about the present Civil Government.

INTRODUCTION.

I. Mr Nairn plainly teaches, that true religion has (by fundamental laws) been made a part of our civil constitution. As to which it must be observed, That although the Presbytery acknowledge,—that the profession, defence and maintenance of the true religion, in doctrine, worship, discipline and Presbyterial Church-government, agreeable unto and founded upon the word of God,—was secured by the fundamental constitution of the civil government in our reforming periods; which deed* of constitution, in all moral respects, is morally unalterable,—because of its agreeableness to the divine will revealed in the word, and because it was attained to and fixed in pursuance of our solemn Covenants: Yet the Presbytery maintain it as a principle founded on the word of God, and agreeable to the Confessions of all the reformed churches,—that as the defection of a nation from attained-to reformation doth not deprive them of a right to choose Civil Magistrates for themselves, and that as subjection to them and obedience to their lawful commands continues a duty incumbent upon the minority who adhere to the covenanted reformation; so also, that these civil rights of the nation and their Magistrates,—did neither arise from, nor were innovated by the reformation once attained

to.—

*Whereas the constitution of the civil government might be considered objectively, in its general nature,—as meaning a mixed monarchy, in a proper balancing of the royal prerogatives and the liberties of the people: the peculiar phrase, [deed of constitution], is used here and afterwards,—to signify the particular manner of acting, as to the settling of that happy constitution; which was formerly on the side of reformation, but is now on the side of deformation.
of the present Civil Government.

II. He farther speaks of certain religious qualifications being (by fundamental laws) made necessary in our Kings. If he means a necessity of religious qualifications, for the well-being of their administration,—and a necessity that the politic body should look out for these, in the choice of a King; then the Presbytery agrees with him: And this is what, by our fundamental laws, was established. But, if he means a necessity of these religious qualifications unto the very being of the regal office, herein indeed they are obliged to differ. For, if any qualifications of revealed religion (which Mr Nairn must mean, otherways he speaks not intelligibly) be necessary unto the very being of the King’s office,—this just coincides with what was formerly said, as to the true religion being a part of the civil constitution: And it lays a farther foundation for Erastianism; for what more can be asserted of a church-officer, than that religious qualifications are necessary to the being of his office?

What then Mr Nairn asserts to have been done by our fundamental laws, is what no human laws whatsoever can or ought to do. No human laws can alter the true distinction of the state from the church, or the true nature of magistracy,—as established by the eternal and unalterable law of God: And, accordingly, the interpretation that Mr Nairn here makes of our fundamental laws, in reforming times,—is not only quite perverse, but inconsistent with the nature of things.

III. He brings in a comparison betwixt the obligation upon the King to profess and preserve the true religion, and the
the obligation upon the People to submit to his legal authority; that the former is as binding as the latter. This comparison has no sense in it, unless he mean,—that the King’s not fulfilling his obligation looses the people from theirs. And,

1. If he means that, upon the King’s not fulfilling obligations, and refusing to be reformed,—the people collectively considered, or as a politic body, are warranted to lay him aside; this is indeed a principle inseparable from the true doctrine of liberty. But what then? All this has no relation to the dispute betwixt Mr Nairn and the Presbytery. The people, collectively considered, in a politic body, are not in a state of subjection. It is evident that superiority must, in the order of nature, be before subjection, the King before the subjects; but the politic body is, in the order of nature, before the King, giving rise to the King,—and so cannot be subject unto him. The politic body, therefore, is a party voluntarily contracting with the King; and their continued concern with him, is anent the observation of a contract,—not anent the yielding of subjection: And the consequence is, that any argument anent the obligations or rights of the people collectively considered, as a politic body,—never touches the question anent the duties or rights of the people separately considered, as subjects. There can be no inference of the one from the other, as they are cases entirely distinct.

2. If Mr Nairn means, that the King’s not fulfilling his obligations, as to the true religion,—looses the people, separately considered as subjects, from their relation to him, and from an obligation to obey his lawful commands; this is impossible, without supposing that Christian qualifications are essential to the being of the kingly office: Which is an absurd and Erastian position, that has been already exposed.

IV. He proceeds to infer, That it is inconsistent with our Covenants to support and acknowledge the King and Parliament in their present condition.

But if Mr Nairn means,—that the principle which the Presbytery now maintains anent subjection to the present civil authority in lawful commands, is any way inconsistent with our Covenant-allegiance; this is what the Presbytery altogether
altogether refuses: And their grounds for so doing may be afterwards laid open.—As to the clause in the solemn League, which binds mutually to preserve the rights and privileges of the Parliaments; common sense tells, that this clause can bind only in so far as Providence gives occasion for it. A Parliament in Scotland we have not: And as to the British Parliament, which is a part of the present legislative power; the Presbytery contend not, that the Covenant lays them under any obligation with reference thereunto, or that they have any concern therewith,—but what belongs unto the Principle which the Presbytery maintains, viz. That we ought to acknowledge the present civil authority over these nations, and to subject ourselves thereunto in lawful commands. This is a principle that respects only these things which are lawful in the present government: And it is very invidious to insinuate, as if it did any way countenance the corruptions of the present King and Parliament,—with reference to the Union, and the settlement of the English Church; all which the Presbytery, as well as Mr Nairn, acknowledge to be corruptions that should be testified against. What manner of fitness has the Presbytery’s principle anent lawful things, with an acknowledgment of what they confess unlawful? Are not things lawful and unlawful*, altogether distinct from and quite opposite to one another? All that Mr Nairn advances of things unlawful in the present government, does indeed say,—That we ought to testify against these; but it does not, in the remotest manner, militate against the Presbytery’s principle respecting what is still lawful.—His opposition to this principle is what he hath not produced one reason for: But has, all along, attacked the same only by bare assertions; which can be no reason for the course he has taken.

However,—for illustrating the truth, for the information of those who are prejudiced, and for the establishment of others; the Presbytery resolve to enter yet more particu-

larly

*The words lawful and unlawful, all along in the present argument,—are to be considered as respecting the law of God.
larly into the question betwixt Mr Nairn and them, about the Civil Government. And all this shall be done in the following DECLARATION and DEFENCE of the Associate Presbytery’s Principles anent the present Civil Government*.

Part I. Concerning the Corruptions of the present Civil Government, in Matters of Religion.

By the indispensable call, the tender mercy, and the holy providence of God,—this Presbytery have been, and are gradually led out, in displaying the banner of a Testimony for the glorious Reformation once attained to in these lands; according to the word of God, and our solemn Covenants: As also, against the defections made therefrom, and the injuries done thereunto, in former and present times.

Some years ago they emitted a Judicial Act and Testimony; which they have since, through divine assistance, been enabled to maintain and prosecute. According to the particular calls of providence hitherto, that Testimony together with the prosecution thereof which has already been,—was especially in favours of our ancient ecclesiastical Reformation; and against these evils whereby the same hath been, in a great measure, departed from and overthrown: While also a Testimony for our ancient civil Reformation,—and against these evils whereby the same hath been, in a great measure, deviated from and destroyed; was lifted up, and all along carried forward: Particularly as to these points which are more immediately connected with the principal matter foresaid.

But, at this time, the Presbytery have a particular call of providence,—to bear witness more especially unto our ancient civil reformation: And not only against manifold defections

*This Declaration and Defence is now given entire, or without any abridgment; but with a proper division of it, under different titles,—which was not made formerly. Some explicatory notes are likeways added.——The Introduction comprehends what is to be found on the same subject, in the preceding Answers.
Defections from and attacks upon the same; but also against some gross and dangerous mistakes that have been lately propagated thereanent.

There was a paragraph once inserted into the overture anent renewing the Covenants, and afterwards translated into a separate act: Which condemns, particularly, “the dangerous extreme that some have gone into, of impugning the present civil authority over these nations and subjection thereunto in lawful commands,—on account of the want of these qualifications Magistrates ought to have, by the word of God and our Covenants; even although they allow us the free exercise of our religion, and are not manifestly unhinging the liberties of the kingdom.” For supporting the condemnation of this extreme, the Presbytery were very far from being under any necessity to extenuate the corruptions of the present civil government, of what sort soever; particularly as to any want of qualifications, necessary by the word of God and our Covenants, wherewith the Magistrate is justly chargeable: Nor did the Presbytery reckon it warrantable for them to be silent, on that occasion, anent these matters; as the being so, in such a case,—might have tended to harden a wicked generation, and to bewilder a witnessing remnant. Accordingly, in the first clause of the foresaid Paragraph and Act, the Presbytery lay down as ground of humiliation before the Lord,—“the national apostasy under which the Lord’s remnant through the land have been groaning; while our rulers have not only neglected, but contradicted their duty, of espousing and supporting the covenanted principles of this Church,—whereby they have greatly provoked the Lord to anger.”

And now, while the Presbytery are led out to a debate in favours of their condemning the above-mentioned dangerous extreme, and for vindicating the principle they maintain in opposition thereunto; they still, upon the foresaid grounds, reckon it unwarrantable for them,—to drop the conjunct and previous consideration of the national apostasy, and the corruption of our rulers: And they conceive that, for the conviction of an apostate generation,
and for the direction of the Lord's people in witnessing work,—it is necessary, on this occasion, to begin with enlarging upon that subject; particularly, by opposing our ancient civil reformation to our present civil deformation. And,

I. As it was once a peculiar duty of the Jewish nation, so it is peculiarly incumbent upon every civil state whereinto Christianity is introduced, to study and bring to pass,—that civil government among them, in all the appertenances of its constitution and administration, run in an agreeableness to the word of God; be subservient unto the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ, and to the interests of the true religion and reformation of the Church: As otherwise they cannot truly prosper in their civil concerns, nor be enriched by the blessings of the gospel*.

This duty, so incumbent upon the civil state, doth generally fall under these two heads: First. The whole people, adjoining themselves to the true Church, should approve themselves to be true members thereof; by serious, several, and mutual endeavours to promote the true religion and reformation of the Church,—privately, publicly and universally, in their several places and callings. Secondly. This people, considered in their conjunct and politic capacity (as thus only the matter is competent unto them) should, by their deed of civil constitution, provide,—that their Magistrates be obliged to concur in the same true religion and reformation; and to rule them by laws no way prejudicial, but serviceable thereunto: As, moreover, they ought to obey, encourage and support their Magistrates in that way; and effectually to endeavour their information and reformation, where deficient or corrupt.

Our

*The case of the Jewish nation is referred to in this paragraph,—only according to the general view in which other nations are on a level with them, as to matters of religion. And it is not to be understood, as if any just consequence could be drawn, about Christian Kings,—from such rights and duties of Jewish Kings, in any direct cognizance of religious matters, as depended on the peculiarity of the dispensation which they were under: According to which, the maintenance of their distinct national state was a part of their religion; while the office and administration of these Kings were typical, with respect to the Lord CHRIST,—the King upon the holy hill of Zion.
Our ancestors, upon the reformation from Popery, were enabled unto great faithfulness in the discharge of this duty. The true religion, purged from the erroneous, idolatrous and superstitious abominations of Popery,—was, by the blessing of God, embraced and professed by all ranks; who were also engaged in a general and progressive course of reformation foresaid. Agreeably unto all this, the deed of Civil Constitution was set upon a reformed footing; by Act VIII. Parl. 1. James VI*.

*“Because that the increase of Vertew, and suppressing of Idolatry, craues,—that the Prince and the people be of ane prefite religion; quhilk of God’s mercie is now presently professed within this realme: THEIRFORE it is statute and ordained, be our Soveraigne Lord my Lord Regent and three Estaites of this present Parliament; that all Kingses and Princes, or Magistrates whatsoever halding their place, quhilkis hereafter in any time fall happen to reigne and beare rule over this realme, at the time of their coronatioun and receipt of their princely authoritie, make their faithfull promise be Aith in presence of the eternall God;—That, induring the haill course of their liues, they fall serue the samin eternall God, to the vttermost of their power; according as he hes required in his maist haly word, reveiled and contained in the New and Auld Testaments: And, according to the samin word, sall mainteine the trew religiouin of Christ Jesus; the preaching of his halie word, and dew and richt ministration of the sacraments, now receiued and preached within this realme;—and sall abolish and gainstand all fals religioun, contrary to the samin: And sall rule the peopill committed to their charge, according to the will and commaund of God—reveiled in his foresaid word; and according to the loueabill lawes and constitutions received in this realme, na wise repugnant to the said word of the eternall God: And sall procure, to the vterrorist of their power, to the Kirk of God and haill Christian peopil, trew and perfite peace in all time cumming; the richtis and rentis, with all just privileges of the Crowne of SCOTLAND, to preserue and keip inviolated,—nouther sall they transfer nor alienate the samin: They sall forbid and represse, in all estaites and degreis,—reife, oppression, and all kindes of wrang: In all judgement, they sall command and procure,—that justice and equitie be keiped to all creatures, without exception; as the Lord and Faither of all Mercyis be merciful to them: And out of their landes and empyre, they sall be careful to rute out all heretikes and enemies to the trew worship of God,—that fall be convict be the true Kirk of God, of the foirsaidis crymes: And that they sall faithfullie affirme the things above written, be their solemn aith.”

[It cannot be competent to the Christian Magistrate, to abolish and gainstand false religion or to root out heretics, and enemies to the true
Though the above settlement was, for some time, followed by suitable administration; yet a course of lamentable defection and corruption therein did soon prevail: ‘til a reviving of the true religion and reformation in the Church took place, and was gloriously advanced betwixt the years 1638 and 1650. That work of God, which became then engaged unto throughout the three kingdoms by a solemn League and Covenant,—was also, in an agreeableness to this Covenant, accompanied with and supported by a civil reformation. In England (wherewith we have become more nearly concerned than formerly, by virtue of the solemn League and Covenant), the civil administration was, in some valuable instances, subservient unto the said work of God. But more considerable advances were made in Scotland: While, beside many laudable acts in the civil administration, the deed of Civil Constitution was farther reformed than ever before; by Act XV of the second session of Parliament, anno 1649*. And, according unto this settlement, was King Charles II crowned at Scoon; January 1st, 1651.

The true worship of God; by any other sort of means than what the true religion can admit of for its propagation: Which cannot admit of being propagated by any means of violence or compulsion. And it cannot consist with the doctrine afterwards taught in this Declaration and Defence, to acknowledge any power in the Christian Magistrate for judging false religion or heresy, (or, which is the same, of what he takes to be so); unto an affecting of men’s natural rights (their lives, liberties or properties) on these accounts: Or otherwise than unto an using the many powerful methods of discountenance and discouragement which are competent to him, without affecting these natural rights.]

*“The Estates of Parliament, taking to their most serious consideration the unhappy differences between their late Sovereign and these kingdoms, caused by the evil counsels about him; unto the great prejudice of religion, and long disturbance of the peace of these kingdoms: As likeways the manifold acts of Parliament, and fundamental constitution of this kingdom, anent the King’s oath at his coronation;— which, judging it necessary that the Prince and people be of one perfect religion, appointeth,—that all Kings and Princes, who shall reign or bear rule over this realm, shall, at their coronation or receipt of their princely authority, solemnly swear to observe in their own persons and to preserve the religion as it is presently established and professed; and rule the people committed to their charge, according to the will of God revealed in his word,— and the loveable constitutions received within this kingdom; and do sundry other

“things
The Presbytery intend not to affirm, that there was nothing *defective* in the above managements; or that no *imprudences* or *mistakes* were to be found therein. It is evident, however, that, by the good hand of God, the Estates of *England*, but more especially of *Scotland,*—

"things, which are more fully expressed therein: And, withal, pondering their manifold obligations to endeavour the securing of religion and the Covenants, before and above all worldly interests:—THEREFORE they do enact, ordain and declare,—That before the King’s Majesty who now is, or any of his successors, shall be admitted to the exercise of his royal power; he shall, by and attour the foresaid oath, assure and declare by his solemn oath, under his hand and seal, his allowance of the National Covenant, and of the solemn League and Covenant; and obligation to prosecute the ends thereof, in his station and calling: And that he shall, for himself and his successors, consent and agree to acts of Parliament enjoining the solemn League and Covenant;—and fully establishing Presbyterian Government, the Directory of Worship, Confession of Faith and Catechisms, as they are approven by the General Assembly of this Kirk and Parliament of this kingdom; in all his Majesty’s dominions: And that he shall observe these in his own practice and family; and that he shall never make opposition to any of these, or endeavour any change thereof.

“It is also declared, enacted and ordained,—That, before the King who now is to be admitted to the exercise of his royal power, he shall leave all counsel and counselors prejudicial to religion, and to the National Covenant and to the solemn League and Covenant; and give satisfaction to the Parliament of this kingdom, as it is now constitute, in what further shall be found necessary for the settling of a happy and durable peace,—preservation of the Union between the kingdoms, and for the good of the Crown, and for his own honour and happiness: And shall consent and agree, that all matters *civil* be determined by the *Parliament* of this kingdom; and all *ecclesiastic* matters by the General Assembly of this Kirk: For the which ends, the Estates of Parliament are resolved to make their humble and earnest addresses to his Majesty, with all possible expedition; all which they find themselves bound to prosecute, and resolve not to recede therefrom,—but to see the same really performed.

“Likes as the Estates of Parliament discharges all the lieges and subjects of this kingdom, to procure or receive from his Majesty,—any commissions, patents, honours, offices, or gifts whatsomever; until his Majesty give satisfaction, as said is: Under pain of their being sensured, in their persons and estates; as the Parliament, or any having power from them, shall judge fitting.

“And if any such commissions, patents, honour, offices, or gifts,—shall be procured or received by any of the subjects of this kingdom, before such satisfaction; the Parliament declares and ordains all such commissions, patents, honours, offices or gifts, and all that shall follow thereupon,—to be void and null.”
were inspired with a noble and predominant zeal for the House of God, in all its valuable institutions; and attained to a considerable pitch of civil reformation, subservient unto the same: All which this Presbytery desires, with thankfulness, to commemorate and bear witness unto. Upon the whole, it is observable, that, in Scotland,—the reformation of the Church hath always (in a beautiful order) preceeded and introduced the reformation of the State. But,

II. It was not long till our sky, thus clearing up, was sadly clouded,—and this beautiful work smothered, as it were in the very cradle; by the woful apostasy of that same generation; especially at, and after the restoration of King Charles II.

The fatal overthrow of the former civil reformation; the devastation of the house and heritage of God; the unparalleled course of perjury, treachery, tyranny,—and desperate hostility against the King, cause, and subjects of Zion,—and against the liberties of mankind; together with the nourishment of abjured Prelacy, Popery, and all abominations;—which were carried on with an high and heaven-daring hand, in that period, by the edge and under the wings of civil government;—are somewhat laid open in the judicial Act and Testimony: And are so fully manifested in known histories, as they need not here be particularly insisted on. However, these things have been so little considered and mourned over,—and the great atonement for sin so little looked to and improven for expiating the same; that it is to be feared the heinous guilt thereof is still lying upon the throne, the body politic, and all ranks in these lands.

At and since the wonderful Revolution, anno 1688,—the three kingdoms have been rescued, by the surprising favour of God, from intolerable tyranny, Popery and slavery. And this Presbytery dare not, without ingratitude to God and injustice to the subject presently under consideration, dissemble or lightly esteem the stigma then put upon the infamous government of the former period; the justice and honour done to the cloud of witnesses and sufferers through the same, by the act rescinding fines and forfeitures: As also, what security is given, by the present civil govern-
ment,—unto our religion*, lives, and liberties; such as no other people now on earth enjoys the like.

Notwithstanding, though the Lord hath dealt so bountifully with these nations, they have not duly remembered him in his ways; they have made no due requital, by returning unto that beautiful reformation,—for apostasizing wherefrom they were sorely plagued, during the space of about twenty-eight years. The kingdom of England, at the revolution, still adhered unto their apostasy; in keeping their government settled in favours of abjured Prelacy, and according to the wicked laws which had been made against England’s reformation. The kingdom of Scotland, at that time, in settling their government, and in offering the Crown to King William and Queen Mary,—not only overlooked the whole civil reformation attained to betwixt the years 1638 and 1650; but left the wicked laws, revoking and razing the same, untouched and in force. Moreover, at the incorporating Union with England, anno 1707,—a farther and very lamentable step of defection was made in our civil settlement; in regard the maintenance and preservation of the hierarchy and ceremonies of the Church of England, is a fundamental and essential article of the said Union; So that it stands upon terms opposite unto, and inconsistent with our Covenant-union; whereby this kingdom is more deeply involved in perjury, and the guilt of England’s apostasy and corruption,—while consenting thereunto. In a word, since the revolution, and by the union-settlement, though Papists and such as marry Papists are absolutely excluded from the Crown, (which is a thing very laudable); and while our Kings are obliged to swear, at their coronation, That they shall inviolably maintain and preserve the settlement and privileges of the Church of Scotland as by law established: Yet they are, at the same time, taken bound and obliged to communicate

*The acknowledgment here made,—of what security is given, by the present Civil Government, unto our religion; must be understood as connected and consistent with the finding of faults afterwards, in the present Civil Constitution and Administration, as to matters of religion. And the finding of these faults, cannot justly interfere with a thankful acknowledgment of what security is given (though not to our religion, in the special profession of it among those of the Secession; yet) to the Protestant and Presbyterian religion in general, which is materially our religion.
communicate with, and to maintain and preserve inviolably the settlement and privileges of the Church of England, in the kingdoms of England and Ireland. And, upon the whole, it appears,—that, under the present constitution, a mighty bar is thrust into the way of the our covenanted reformation, both in Church and State; yea, a gravestone is laid, and established upon the same.

Thus, our ancient civil reformation has been apostasized from and grievously defaced. Notwithstanding the golden season afforded us, and the powerful obligation we were laid under to the Lord,—by his surprising appearance for us at the Revolution; yet all ranks have dealt very treacherously and ungratefully: They have not studied personal reformation; they have not endeavoured, severally and conjunctly, to promote the true religion and reformation of the Church once attained to and professed in these lands: The body politic, particularly in Scotland, have never, by their deed of civil constitution,—provided that their Magistrates be brought under, and admitted upon obligations and terms, such as were fixed upon and established in reforming periods, (particularly in the Coronation-oath,annis 1567 and 1649); but such as are, in many respects, not only different from, but destructive of the same,—unto the great prejudice of real religion, and reformation in the house of God: They have never endeavoured to inform their Magistrates of their sin and duty in this matter, or to reform them from corruptions; but, on the contrary, they have been a snare and a stumbling block unto them. And it is evident, that on all these accounts, great guilt and wrath from the Lord is still lying and increasing upon the body politic; wherein also all ranks, our princes, our pastors, our people,—are very deeply involved.

Moreover, as our civil settlement has been thus corrupted, so it hath natively issued in a course of defective and corrupt administrations; unto the dishonour of God, and the detriment of his work. The Presbytery do not pretend to give out a full enumeration of these, and they only mention the following.

At the Revolution, Prelacy was not abolished as contrary to the word of God and abjured by our Covenants: The
settlement of Presbytery was according to the former settlement, anno 1592; and all the legal securities given to this Church from 1638 to 1650, were overlooked; nor was any regard had to the solemn Oaths and Covenants which we then came under: The wicked laws anno 1661 condemning and razing our covenanted reformation, were left untouched; a general oath of allegiance was imposed, plainly excluding the oath of our Covenants: And, contrary to the reformed practice anno 1649,—such were retained in places of public trust and military office, as were enemies to our reformation; and had been deeply involved in the horrid defection, persecution and bloodshed of the former period. The power and privileges of the Church were incroached upon, by dissolving the Assembly 1692; and adjourning the same from time to time till 1694: As indeed by the act 1592, according to which Presbytery was settled at the Revolution,—the Assembly is deprived of power, where the King or his Commissioner are present, to nominate and appoint time and place for their next meeting.

After the Union, the whole nation was made to groan under the weight of unnecessary,—repeated, sinful, and ensnaring oaths. A superstitious form of swearing, by laying the hands upon and kissing the gospels, was soon introduced from England; and a foundation was laid for the farther debauching the members of this Church, by the Sacramental Test*: While also the Oath of abjuration was first imposed on these in civil and military trust, and afterwards extended to the Ministers of this Church; and which, however, at length altered, did still homologate the united constitution,—and the corruptions of the Church of England, involved therein. Farther, though any active toleration to the least evil be altogether unwarrantable; yet, in the year 1712, a very dangerous blow was given to the government and discipline of this Church, and a very wide door was opened to error and profanity,—by an almost boundless toleration. And, at the same time, a very sinful and sad encroachment was made upon the costly and valuable privileges of the Lord’s people, and a door open-

*See the note on this subject, in the parallel place of the Judicial Testimony, p. 94.
ed for the corruption of the Church and the ruin of souls; while the right of patronages (which had been abolished, anno 1649) was again restored: And however this was afterwards restricted, yet it has still continued an intolerable yoke and snare; the lamentable effects whereof have overspread this land. Countenance has been likewise given for introducing amongst us the abjured superstition of observing holy days; and that by the vacation of our most considerable Courts of Justice, in the latter end of December. And as, by the Union, this kingdom hath become subjected to a Parliament whereof the Bishops of England are constituent members; so, an attempt is made to force the members of this Church unto an approbation of the English hierarchy,—while they can get no addresses received by the Upper House of Parliament, unless they bear a direction to the Lords Spiritual as well as Temporal.

The above are evils that have taken deep root among us, for a considerable time; and the most whereof are more particularly spoken of in the Judicial Act and Testimony.

Moreover, the law of God hath been despised,—and a toleration, upon the matter, given to diabolical arts and practices; by the act repealing the penal statutes against Witches*. Likewise (as hath been declared by this Presbytery in their Declinature),—a bold and fatal encroachment was made, anno 1737, upon the headship and sovereignty of Zion’s King; by that Erastian Act anent Captain John Porteous†. Farther, though it be unwarrantable for the Civil Magistrate in ordinary cases,—and where there is, and where access may be had to the judicatories of a right constitute Church, or that he sustains as such,—to appoint fasts and thanksgivings simply by his own power; yet not only was the intrinsic power of the Church despised, some time after the Revolution,—in the appointment of several fasts and thanksgivings merely by civil authority: But, of late years, while the judicatories have practically surrendered this intrinsic power to the Magistrate; he hath also practically assumed and exercised the same, in appointing fasts.

*See the Note on this subject, in the parallel place of the Judicial Testimony, p. 164.

†See the Note on this subject, p. 168, etc.
farts merely by his own authority: For, whatever was his
design, yet this was plainly the design of his appointments; in
regard the judicatories accepted the same, as answers to their
petitions for nominating the day,—and he hath never
discouraged them, in their said surrender and acceptance:
Against all which this Presbytery maintain a stated Testimony;
though they have not reckoned it necessary to apply the same,
on repeated occasions, otherways than by their practice.

All these corrupt administrations this Presbytery judge to
be causes of the Lord’s wrath and deep controversy; which he is
pouring out upon, and pleading with all ranks in these lands.
And as, by the above-mentioned apostasy and corruption in the
settlement and administration of the present Civil Government,
the measure of guilt upon the body politic and their legislators is
greatly filled up; so this Presbytery judge the said evils to be
condemned by the word of God: As also, That we ought to be
deeply humbled for, and to testify against the same; in hope that
the Lord will yet purely purge away our dross, and take away
all our tin.

The Presbytery having (as they judged necessary)
premised this Testimony for our ancient civil reformation; and
against the apostasy therefrom and opposition thereunto: They
now proceed unto the second clause of the fore-mentioned
Paragraph and Act, which hath given rise to Mr Nairn’s dissent
and secession.

Part II. Concerning the Authority of, and Subjection to the
present Civil Government.

What the Presbytery have yet ado here, is to vindicate their
condemning “The dangerous extreme, of impugning the present
Civil Authority over these nations; and subjection thereunto in
lawful commands:” The condemnation whereof may be
sufficiently vindicated, by defending that principle which the
Presbytery maintain in opposition thereunto.
Section I. The true State of the Question.

And here, for determining the true State of the Question, from the industrious misrepresentation whereof Mr Nairn’s scheme hath hereto borrowed all its defence and reputation; it is necessary to premise that,

1st, The question is not,—whether we ought to own the authority of mere usurpers or habitual tyrants, even in any lawful commands.

Mere usurpers can have no lawful authority: And if they shall acquire the consent of the people, whether expressed or tacit (as was the case of Caesar with the Jewish people), they then cease to be mere usurpers; and are invested with authority, whereunto God commands subjection and obedience in matters lawful.

Again, in order to render one an habitual tyrant, it is, at least, necessary, that he leave ruling by just laws; and that he be engaged in war against the lives, or invading and overthrowing the avowed liberties and privileges of the nation, civil and religious; or all of these: As was the case in persecuting times before the Revolution. It cannot be supposed that such a person has any real consent of the nation to rule, whence he can have no lawful authority.

Thus, however quietly and orderly one may be obliged to live under mere usurpers or habitual tyrants; yet there should be no acknowledgment of their authority, as binding upon the conscience. But if any should have the face to alledge, That our present rulers do any way deserve these characters; it is quite needless to reason with them.

2dly, The question is not,—whether we should disobey the unlawful commands, and may defend ourselves against the oppression of rulers.

The Presbytery’s principle of subjection and obedience doth only respect things lawful: Nor is it at all inconsistent with any self-defence that is necessary, lawful and expedient,—according to the word of God, and right reason; such as our worthy ancestors endeavoured at Pentland and Bothwell. Yea, there is no manner of inconsistency, betwixt being in a posture of self-defence against particular injuries offered by a Magistrate,—and an owning, at the same
same time, his title and authority in what lawful commands he may impose.

3dly, The question is not,—what Magistrates ought to be or do. There is nothing this way incumbent upon them, by the word of God or our Covenants, which the Presbytery do not acknowledge and plead for: Nor does their principle anent subjection and obedience,—homologate the least defect in these things; or bind up from endeavouring in our several capacities to have Magistrates reformed, according to the said obligation.

4thly, The question is not,—whether the present Civil Government be chargeable with many gross corruptions; both habitual and actual.

Mr Nairn endeavours to make the world believe, that the Presbytery’s principle has some favourable aspect upon the corruptions of the Government (viz. these that are properly irreligious); and that his own scheme doth only set up for more faithfulness in that respect. However, the Presbytery confess and condemn, not only the actual corruptions, or corrupt Administrations, which it is competent for them as a Court of Christ to meddle with; particularly, these above-mentioned: But also the apostasy from the former reformed deed of Constitution, and the corruption of the present settlement; which have, in some measure, been laid open. Only they cannot grant, that the civil nature and authority of the constitution are thereby subverted or invalidated.

5thly, The question is not,—Whether it be lawful for us to swear the present allegiance to the Civil Government; which the Presbytery acknowledge they cannot do: Seeing there are no oaths to the Government in being,—but what exclude the oath of our Covenants, or homologate the united constitution. And Mr Nairn had no occasion to make repeated mention, in his Dissents and Secession, of swearing allegiance; as he had never any ground given him, by the Presbytery, to suppose that they had any view thereof different from what is above expressed.

And now, it is abundantly evident,—that the true state of the questions extends no farther than this, viz.

As, by the word of God and our Covenants, we are inviolably bound, in our several capacities,—to confess, op-
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pose, and testify against all the corruptions and evils of the present Civil Government over these nations; whereby the reformation once established therein has been departed from, opposed and overthrown: OUGHT we not, at the same time, to acknowledge the civil authority of the said Government, in the administration and commands thereof that are lawful; and to yield subjection thereunto in these circumstances? 

It is only in so far as Mr Nairn answers this question in the negative, that the Presbytery has any controversy with him anent the civil authority of the present Government. The Presbytery AFFIRMS, That we ought to acknowledge the present civil authority over these nations, and subjection thereunto in lawful commands; according as this their principle is held forth in their Act passed at Edinburgh, February 3d 1743,—which is to be subjoined unto this Declaration.

Section II. A Defence of the Presbytery’s Judgment concerning the present Civil Government.

And, for defence of this Principle, they affirm, in the manner following,—That it is agreeable to the plain tenor of Scripture; and to the principles of all the reformed Churches, particularly of this Church in her Confession and Covenants: Where it will also appear, that the Presbytery had just ground to condemn the opposite scheme now on foot.

Article I. The Agreeableness of the Presbytery’s Judgment to the plain Tenor of Scripture.

The Presbytery’s principle anent the present Civil Government, as above declared, is agreeable to the plain tenor of Scripture. The verdict of Scripture in this matter, is not comprehended in some few,—dark or transitory hints. The principle for which the Presbytery now contends, is obviously taught and confirmed by a great number of passages throughout Holy Writ: Yea, there are few truths, relative to the practice of Christians,—that are more clearly taught in the word, or more inculcated, than this is. But it
it may suffice, at present, to adduce a few Scripture *Precepts* and *Examples*; expressly confirming the principle maintained by the Presbytery, as above-mentioned.

**Proof I. From Scripture-precepts.**

It is held forth unto us by Scripture-precepts, which are of perpetual obligation.

**Argument I. From Prov. xxiv. 21.**

The first that shall be noticed, is recorded *Prov. xxiv. 21*. *My son, fear thou the Lord and the King: And meddle not with them that are given to change.* Though these words be expressed in the singular number, it would be superfluous to prove,—That they must be taken in a plural sense; determining the duty, particularly of the Lord’s people, towards Kings: Nor could *Solomon*, while himself a King, be partial in this case, because he spoke as moved by the *Holy Ghost*.

I. The former clause of this precept is positive; *My son, fear thou the Lord and the King.* And the first thing which, in the present case, must be considered,—is the duty here prescribed towards Kings, viz. to *fear* them. This fear cannot be of a slavish sort, because it is commanded; and that as subordinate unto the *fear of the Lord*. Again, this fear cannot merely signify that disposition of mind which we ought to have toward Kings. But, as the fear of the Lord, in Scripture stile, doth signify, not only an inward disposition of mind; but also *all* these external duties that we owe to him: So the fear of Kings must also denote all these external duties that we owe to them. Now, from the nature of the thing, all such duties are reducible to these two heads. *First*, We must confess that they are Kings; by owning their authority, and submitting to their just laws. *Secondly*, That this acknowledgment and submission may not be treacherous,—we must, in our several capacities, testify against all these particular evils whereby they answer not or contradict the duty of Kings. These are the parts of fear toward Kings; so inseparable, that neither of them can be duly managed unless they be jointly exercised. And this is just what the Presbytery
bytery asserts, with respect to the present Civil Government.

The next thing to be considered here is, the objects of the duty enjoined, viz. Kings. And, upon this head, it must be premised,—that as the different forms of Civil Government agree in their general nature, and as none of them has any institution exclusive of others; so the general rule of duty towards the supreme legislative power under any one of these forms, answers as well under them all: However, it is monarchical or kingly government that is here immediately respected.

The question will now be, What sort of Kings are the people of God thus commanded to fear? And, in the first place, it is certain,—that they are commanded to fear only such as are acknowledged by the kingdom they are in; while none else are Kings with respect to them. In the next place, It is as certain,—that they are commanded to fear any whom that kingdom acknowledges as Kings, and while they do so. For,

1. This precept was still handed down to the Jews, from one generation to another, as part of the oracles of God immediately committed unto them; nor was it at any time altered, limited or suspended: And therefore it continued always an uniform rule of duty from God unto them,—with reference to whatever Kings were acknowledged as such, by the kingdom of Judah and Israel; though most of these were chargeable with unparalleled evils,—not only in respect to their private character and conduct, but in their public administration. As it must be still remembered, that though God might justly plead a controversy with that land, and many time did so,—both for the sins of the body politic, in not attending to all the rules he gave them anent the choice of their Kings, and in not endeavouring to reform their wicked Kings; as also, for the sins of the people severally,—in not testifying duly against, but complying with the sinful statutes and idolatrous practices of their Kings: Yet, while the primores regni and better part of the nation acknowledged such as their Kings, consenting to their regal authority; the office and authority of these Kings did, therefore, still continue valid,—so as the particular subjects were bound in consci-
ence to submit unto, and obey their lawful commands: Because that civil authority, having its rise in the consent of the people according to the indispensable law of nature,—it could not be subverted by their defection and apostasy; or by their Kings, in consequence thereof, wanting scriptural qualifications.

2. The Jewish people were obliged by God to reckon that, in the matter of this precept, they were but on a level with the people of all other kingdoms; in respect of whatever Kings were thereby acknowledged: And that they themselves were, by this precept, bound to fear these Kings,—when, sojourning in their dominions. For these whom other kingdoms acknowledged as Kings, are, all along, by the Spirit of God in scripture, acknowledged and accounted of as such; and that in as unexceptionable terms as any of the Jewish Kings are: In regard there is not the least word in scripture, which so much as insinuates that these kingdoms were wrong in thus acknowledging them; but, on the contrary, the scripture always countenances them in doing so,—and leaves not the Jews any occasion of doubting, that the character and right of these Kings did not agree unto this precept. To this purpose, when our Lord Jesus, who is Mediator betwixt God and man, says, by his Spirit through Solomon (Prov. viii. 15, 16.); By me Kings reign, and Princes decree justice; By me Princes rule, and Nobles, even all the Judges of the earth: It is undeniable that, in these words, he not only narrates the government, but sustains the authority of Judges or Kings: And it is as plain, that not only the Jewish Kings are here spoken of, but all the Kings of the earth; so that the authority of all is sustained on a level. When therefore the Jews received this precept, with reference unto their own Kings; it is evident that other oracles of God, and particularly the above cited, did at the same time necessitate them to reckon,—that whatever Kings were acknowledged as such by other kingdoms, had an equal right unto fear from their people;—and that they themselves were equally obliged, by this precept, to fear such Kings, when sojourning in their dominions: According whereunto, when long after some of them were scattered through the countries of such Kings; this same precept was
was repeated [1 Pet. ii. 17.], as in force with application to them in these circumstances.

In a word, this text doth plainly teach,—that the Lord’s people, particularly, ought to fear all Kings who are acknowledged as such by the kingdom they belong to; as there is no exception made here or elsewhere in scripture. And, indeed, there was no need of any exception or limitation to be added unto this precept. He who commanded to fear Kings, did, at the same time, know well enough,—that neither all, not most, nor any of them, were free of manifold and gross corruptions. By his inspiration it was, that Solomon saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there, Eccl. iii. 16. However, the precept given did sufficiently hit such cases, without needing any restriction. For as there never were, nor could be, any Kings acknowledged as such by a kingdom,—but who administered some justice; so all the duty of particular subjects, under the worst of these Kings, is sufficiently comprehended in this command: As it binds them to acknowledge and submit unto their authority, in any lawful exercise of it, while the kingdom sustains their government; but at the same time obliges them, and leaves them full capacity to testify and contend, in their several places, against all their corruptions,—and, in this way, to endeavour the reformation of the government: So that the subjection commanded, can never involve them in the guilt of public corruptions.

Here, then, the duty of the Lord’s people, particularly, towards Kings, is fully stated; and it is the same with what the Presbytery now affirms. Nor is this a duty of small importance; while the fear of the King is commanded jointly with the fear of the Lord: And so, whatever religion any profess toward God,—they will not be found duly upright therein, when contradicting the duty toward Kings which God here requireth.

II. The latter clause of this precept is negative; Meddle not with them that are given to change.

For understanding this, it must first be considered,—who are the persons referred to by the pronoun [them]: And it is needless to prove, because so evident, that the
text will not admit of any other sense here,—than to understand it of those who are bound to fear the Lord and the King, who yet are given to change; and whom, therefore, the sincerer sort are discharged to meddle with.

And now it is supposed, that there will readily be some men given to change; men of a restless spirit, of a double mind, and of an unstable conduct: Men addicted to novelties; and who, particularly, will depart out of the old road of duty toward civil superiors, upon new pretences. And where innovations are made here, there will readily be some change in the profession or practice of religion; as the fear of the Lord and the King are linked together, and the text speaks jointly of being given to change in both.

At the same time it is here implied,—that even the children of God are in danger of meddling with such persons; and have special need to be upon their guard against them.

Thus, in these words, there is an express condemnation of changes from the old path of duty toward civil superiors.

Again, there is here a solemn charge given to the sons of God, to notice the danger they are in of being led aside by the specious pretences that such persons may use,—and not so much as to meddle with them; for if they stand not at a distance, they may readily be entangled.

Moreover, this caution and charge is a plain confirmation of, and a sense that God hath set about that very principle and conduct which the Presbytery does maintain from this text.

**Argument II. From Eccles. x. 4.**

The next precept that shall be considered, is found in Eccles. x. 4. If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences. And here the following observations may be made.

1. For the same reasons that were advanced upon the former text, this must necessarily be understood as spoken to the Lord’s people,—with reference to any rulers presently acknowledged by the civil state which they belong to.

2. There
2. There is a supposition here made, *If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee*. This *rising up* of spirit must be understood as groundless, and therefore sinful; because the person spoken to is supposed not, as yet, to have left his place or duty. Again, this *rising spirit* must be understood as venting itself, by word or action; for, otherways, it could have no tendency to drive a person out of his place. And as the expression is general,—without being confined unto any certain occasion or degree of rising up, or unto any particular manner of venting itself; it will therefore necessarily comprehend any wrath or wrong that a particular subject may meet with at the ruler’s hand,—whether upon private quarrels, or on account of religion; as enmity against religion is vented always upon the professors thereof.

3. There is a direction here given, *Leave not thy place*: Which cannot be taken in a local sense, on several accounts; and particularly, because then the next words (viz. *For yielding pacifieth great offences*), instead of being a reason for this command, would be a plain contradiction of it. The words must therefore be taken in a moral sense, as respecting the special business and duty of the subject; which, as hath been considered, is to fear the King or Ruler. The first two clauses, then, of this text, do plainly teach us,—That, upon supposition of a ruler’s being so corrupt as, without just ground, to discountenance, discourage or distress the subject, upon personal or religious accounts; the subject must not, in the mean time, repay him evil for evil: But while he is bound to use lawful endeavours, as his calling gives access,—for self-preservation, for vindicating his innocency and the cause for which he suffers, and for having the government reformed; he must, at the same time, continue in subjection and obedience to the ruler in lawful matters, while the civil state continues to acknowledge him. And as this can be no way inconsistent with his faithful endeavours otherways; so hereby he will approve himself unto God and men,—as single, self-denied, and conscientious in these endeavours. But,

4. There is a reason added to this command, *For yielding pacifieth great offences*. This clause cannot consist with
of the present Civil Government.

the former, unless it be taken in a moral sense. And as a reason is here given of the foregoing command, so it cannot make sense,—unless this *yielding* be understood as the same thing with the duty commanded. And therefore, the meaning will be this,—*Leave not, or keep, thy place; for yielding, or the keeping of thy place, pacifieth great offences.*

Here then we are informed that, when the spirit of the ruler riseth up unjustly against the subject,—corrupt nature (as is evidently seen in the present controversy) is ready to manage a selfish opposition; in retaliating the ruler, by transgressing also the rule of duty toward him: And therefore, the subject’s keeping by his duty in that case,—is fitly called an *yielding*; as it is contrary to that selfish opposition which corrupt nature is inclined unto.

It is said, that this *yielding pacifieth great offences*: And it does so in two ways.

(1.) By way of antidote. For the subject’s standing to his duty in that capacity, when the spirit of the ruler riseth up against him,—is an habile mean for convincing the ruler of his error, and for extinguishing the offence he has taken.

(2.) By way of anticipation; as it is an habile mean for preventing farther evils and extremes which both the ruler and the subject may afterwards be driven to, if once the subject leave his place: For *the beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water; therefore (saith the Lord) leave off contention, before it be meddled with*, Prov. xvii. 4.

And, upon the whole, it is very evident from this text,—that the scheme of such as oppose what the Presbytery here affirms, as it is a *leaving their place*, because of the unwarrantable opposition that the ruler stands in to them in any cause of truth which they profess; so it is a direct breach of God’s command,—and has a proper tendency to perpetuate these errors or evils wherewith the ruler is chargeable, instead of reforming him: Yea, it is properly calculated for driving both him and them farther forward into great offences. And, on the other hand, it is as plain,—that the principle and conduct which the Presbytery maintains, is openly held forth and expressly enjoined by God’s command; and that it is a mean and method of
of God’s appointment, for pacifying great offences, viz. in
reforming the Magistrate from his present corruptions, in
preventing the farther growth thereof,—and in preserving the
Lord’s people from other evils and extremes they may be driven
to, in this time of trial and temptation, if they study not to keep
their place as above explained.


The third precept which the Presbytery adduces for
confirming the principle here maintained is delivered by our
Lord, Luke xx. 25. Render therefore unto Caesar the things
which be Caesar’s and unto God the things which be God’s.
And, for the clearing of this text, there are several things to be
considered; viz.

I. A question was now proposed unto our Lord, anent a
certain people’s subjection to a certain ruler. The people were
not Gentiles, or such as had never been reformed; but Jews, a
people in covenant with God,—whom the Lord had chosen to
be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that
were upon the earth. Again, the ruler was Caesar, an heathen;
who, at this time, did actually rule over the Jewish people,—
being by them acknowledged as their King, John xix. 15.

II. The question proposed to our Lord anent that people
and this ruler, was, Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar
or no? The question is not, whether any tribute allotted to the
use of the temple should be alienated unto Caesar’s use; but it is
anent paying of tribute in general, as an effect and token of their
subjection unto Caesar. And unto this general question our
Lord answers, in the words above cited.

When his answer is considered, it appears too bold to
pretend,—that therein he shifts the question, and leaves
Caesar’s title unto tribute from the Jews undetermined. For,

1. It is very true that these hypocrising spies, who put the
question to our Lord,—were sent out, by the Chief priests and
the scribes, upon a captious and very wicked design; which they
were at liberty to pursue more privately, or before the people, as
they should find occasion. And, accordingly, when they did
now question him before

the
the people,—it was not for information, as if they doubted anent paying of tribute to Caesar; but it was that they might take hold of his words (or entangle him, as Matth. xxii. 15). And it is equally true,—that as he perceived their craftiness, and rebuked them for it; so he gave them an answer that disappointed them: For they could not take hold of his words before the people; and they marveled at his answer, and held their peace. Their disappointment, then, did ly here,—that they could not take hold of his words before the people, which was the malicious errand they had been sent out upon. And this does not signify, that they could not understand his words; for then their wicked errand had been no more than to understand what he spoke, which is absurd: But the meaning is, that they could not entangle him,—or make an handle of his words against him.

However, for the farther opening of this case, it is needful to observe,—That, when proposing the question, as they deceitfully introduced themselves by professing that he did not accept the person of any; so, they did not want that our Lord should own Caesar’s title, as if hereby he would raise the people against himself: For there is no ground given to suppose that this would have provoked them, but the contrary. And besides, they were sent to take hold of his words, so as to deliver him unto the power and authority of the Governor who ruled under and for Caesar; and before whom, therefore, they durst not accuse any for owning Caesar. And so it is plain, that they could not presently have any thing in view,—but that either he should expose himself to the pains of the Roman law, by disowning Caesar’s title; or that he should own it in such terms, as would reflect or encroach upon the privileges of the Jewish Church and religion,—so as they might deceitfully forge an accusation against our Lord Jesus before the Governor, upon the matters of their law. But in any such expectations our Lord disappointed them. For, in his answer, he acknowledged Caesar’s title: And by annexing, at the same time, the command of rendering unto God the things which be God’s,—he preserved the regard and obedience that were due unto God, in his Being and institutions; and determined the just manner and
measure of obedience unto Caesar,—so as, however they might be rebuked by it, they could not find fault with it. Thus, he disappointed their wicked design in all respects. They could not take hold of his words before the people; they could not find him chargeable with any encroachment upon either civil or ecclesiastic law; nor durst they allledge any such thing, while the people were present and capable of contradicting so false an accusation. And now, they were not only silent,—but they marvelled at his answer: There was divine wisdom in it, worthy of the Son of God and worthy to be marvelled at; as it would have been every way unworthy of him, and unworthy of being marvelled at,—if his words had contained no wisdom but what lies in ambiguity, shifting or equivocation. But again,

2. To alledge that this was the case here, would be an using too much freedom with the person and perfection of Jesus Christ. He might indeed have lawfully refused to answer their captious question, had he seen meet; but to impute a shifting or equivocal answer unto our Lord, is to reproach and blaspheme him.—For, either Caesar had not a just title, or he had: If he had not, then a shifting answer would have, at least, dissembled and palliated sin; instead of tending to reclaim from it;—if he had, then such an answer would have, at least, dissembled and dishonoured truth; instead of declaring and recommending it. Besides, the answer given plainly bears the shape and force of a command: And it must be very dishonouring unto the person and perfection of Christ,—to fix upon him an ambiguous and shifting command, or a command that commands no certain thing. Again,

3. To suppose, that our Lord’s answer shifts the question, would be an using violence upon the words; for, shifting is inconsistent with the very nature of a command: And farther, it is remarkable that,

(1.) Our Lord begins to confound his crafty examiners, by enquiring at them anent the coin of their current money, (as the tribute money could have no coin distinct from other money); and he finds, out of their own mouth, that it bore Caesar’s image and superscription: Thus he draws from themselves, both an evidence and acknowledgment of Caesar’s dominion over them.

(2.) He
(2.) He immediately brings this in as a reason of the command, Render THEREFORE unto Caesar the things which be Caesar’s. And this word [therefore] can have no reasoning in it, and the form and strength of the whole argument must be destroyed; unless it be understood to intimate that the command is brought in as agreeing unto, and as an inference from what had been immediately before confessed, viz. That the money bore Caesar’s image and superscription. Now the command cannot possibly agree unto, or be an inference from this; unless it enjoin the paying of tribute to Caesar. And so the meaning is, as if our Lord had said,—Caesar is actually, and by the nation’s consent, your Supreme Civil Ruler; as appears, among other things, from this,—that the money ye use bears his image and superscription: For though this be not a mark of his having the property of all your money; yet it is a plain evidence of his said superiority, and your subjection: Therefore render unto Caesar whatsoever is incumbent upon subjects, and particularly tribute; as unto all this he has a lawful right.——But,

(3.) Abstracting from the connection, these words [Render unto Caesar the things which be Caesar’s] can mean nothing at all; if they mean not that Caesar had a civil right, that there were things thus belonging unto him. And moreover, to deny this would not only be the utmost violence upon these words; but would also force a meaning upon the next words, grossly erroneous,—which could not be ascribed unto our Lord without blasphemy. For, if Caesar’s right be undetermined here, then God’s right is undetermined in the following words, viz. And unto God the things which be God’s. If there be ambiguity in any of these clauses, there must be in both; for both God’s right and Caesar’s are in the same terms asserted: And this is, of itself, a sufficient argument against interpreting our Lord’s words as equivocal,—which some have done; that thereby he is brought in as shifting and calling in question the prerogatives of his Father,—before that generation, which stood in peculiar need of quite other doctrine.

Thus, that our Lord enjoined subjection by individuals unto Caesar, particularly in paying tribute, has been clear-
ed: Yea, in doing so, he proceeds upon no other or better qualification in Caesar,—than that he was actually and allowedly in power over the Jewish nation; as appearing, particularly, by the coin of their money. And it must be granted, that the command is of equal force in all parallel cases; and that, therefore, it plainly agrees to the principle here maintained by the Presbytery.

The precepts already insisted on were given unto the Jewish people, as a special rule of duty toward civil rulers; and, as such, they were immediately handed down to Christians, in these Churches that were planted by the Apostles.—But the Divine care, in providing for their establishment in this duty against all temptations, did not rest here. The Apostles of our Lord, and by his counsel, were not ignorant or forgetful of Satan’s devices; in improving every handle, for tempting such as he cannot detain in profanity, to turn over into some apparent purity of their own invention. And considering the extraordinary handles which that subtle adversary had, for tempting these Christians unto such an extreme,—in throwing off all civil concern with such rulers as they had then ado with; the Apostles were therefore specially directed to build some new and very strong bulwarks, for defence at this quarter: And which are of standing use in all ages, against any such errors and mistakes. Thus,

Argument IV. From Rom. xiii. 1,—7.

There is another precept, very express unto the purpose in hand, which is declared Rom. xiii. 1; being also explained and confirmed downwards unto the 8th verse of that chapter: Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, etc.

The present design neither requires or permits, that these verses be expounded,—either wholly, or according to the order in which they ly: But it is needful briefly to lay open and vindicate the establishment they give unto the principle now asserted; so as any who will wrest them (against the express warning, 2 Pet. iii. 16, 17.) may be left inexcusable. And, for this end, there must be some separate consideration of four things; whereunto the
the matter of these verses is reducible, viz. The objects of the command, the duty commanded, the objects of this duty, and the reasons whereby it is enforced.

I. The objects of the command are called, every Soul; by which expression (according to Scripture-stile, the context, and the Apostle’s scope) are signified human persons: Particularly all these at this time in Rome, who had embraced the Christian profession. The whole Epistle was specially directed to them: And in the 3d, 4th, 5th and 6th verses of this chapter, the Apostle expressly inculcates the duty commanded upon them; in the pronouns,—Thou, thee, you, and ye.

II. The duty here commanded comprehends the whole of what men can owe, even unto any civil superiors as such. It is, in general, to be subject, (ver. 1.): particularly in rendering tribute, custom, fear, and honour, (verses 6, 7); and that not only for wrath, but also for conscience-sake, (ver. 5.),—or, not only from the consideration of danger but also of duty. This is the utmost civil subjection that can be due to any: And all this is here enjoined upon every soul; particularly, upon all the Christians then living in Rome.

III. The objects of this duty are called higher powers, ver. 1. And it is certain, that this character doth properly signify, not civil offices but officers; not magistracy in the abstract, but Magistrates in the concrete: And particularly the Magistrates then existing in the Roman empire.

Toward the clear perception of this, it may be considered,—that if the Apostle were speaking without any respect to the persons at that time in power through the Roman empire, and so excluding them from the proper right of Magistrates; he would then be plainly departing from other Scripture-precepts, particularly these already insisted on: He would be openly contradicting his own inspired writings, [Tit. iii. 1. 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2, 3.]; he would be openly condemning the constant and approven tract of Scripture-examples,—and particularly his own,—Acts xxiv and xxv. Thus, also, he would be openly commending what is openly condemned, 2 Pet. ii. 10. Jude ver. 8. But, moreover,
1. To alledge that he speaks of magistracy in the abstract, and not of Magistrates, particularly such as then were,—makes his language altogether absurd. For there is a plurality here spoken of [viz. higher powers]; and this plurality must be all of the same general nature, because it is but one and the same duty which is commanded towards them all: But it is absolutely impossible and absurd, that there should be a plurality of abstractions of the same general nature; because one abstract thing exhausts the whole nature of that thing. Though then there be many Magistrates, yet magistracy can be but one in number: And to use or explain the plural word [powers] in a civil sense, and any other way than as properly signifying persons in power,—is perfectly absurd, as being inconsistent with the nature of things. Nor is it any thing less absurd, to enjoin subjection unto Magistracy in the abstract; because it has no real being in the abstract, and it is impossible to be subject unto that which really is not. In the matter of subjection, magistracy must always be considered as subsisting only in the person of Rulers; and the Romans of that time could not be subject to it, but as subsisting in the person of these Rulers who then were. Agreeably unto all this,

2. It is usual in Scripture, that the abstract be put for the concrete; as there are five instances of this in one verse, 1 Cor. xii. 28. And God hath set some in the Church,——miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. But, more particularly, when the plural word here translated [powers] is elsewhere used in Scripture, it always properly signifies persons in power; as Luke xii. 11. Eph. iii. 10. and vi. 12. Col. i. 16. and ii. 15. 1 Pet. iii. 22. Tit. iii. 1. The first and last of which texts are parallel, in the present case, unto this now under consideration. And,

3. To fix any other meaning upon the word here, as if the Apostle were not speaking of Magistrates, particularly such as then were; not only is inconsistent with the nature of things, contradicts parallel texts of Scripture, and renders Scripture-language of an unfixed sense: But it represents the Apostle as writing needlessly, and under a sinful and dangerous mistake; contrary to the infallible conduct of the
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of the present Civil Government.

the Holy Spirit he was under. It is essential to all the books of Scripture,—that every part of them was needful, with respect to the duty and interest of men; at that very time when they were first wrote, as well as in after ages: while it would be an impeachment of God to alledge, that he ever made any revelation which was of no use in the time when it was made. But as the passage of Scripture now insisted upon belongs to the rule of manners,—what need of it could the Romans then living stand in; if it was not to be applied unto themselves, with reference to the rulers then in being? What manner of use could they, in this case, have for it? How needless behoved to be the Apostle’s labour, in giving a rule of manners, with reasonings and expostulations thereanent,—unto persons who had no interest in it; no warrant, no access to meddle with it? Yea, his mistake in doing so behoved to be sinful and dangerous: Because if it was unlawful for that people to apply what he wrote unto their own case,—the manner of his writing was calculated for leaving them unto, and leading them into sin. For, while he presseth and reasons with them anent the duty of subjection to higher power; he nowhere gives them the least hint, that they ought not thus to apply his words: He says nothing to prevent their doing so. Yea, as appears from what has been advanced,—it was impossible for them to receive his Epistle as canonical, without making such application: Nor was it otherways possible for them to understand what is here written. For,

4. In this passage, the Apostle puts it beyond all doubt,—that, when mentioning higher powers, he properly means persons in power; particularly these whom the Romans had then ado with: So that his words do openly reject any other sense. For, when giving a reason of subjection to these same higher powers,—he calls them RULERS, (ver. 3.), and God’s MINISTERS, (ver. 6.): And, speaking individually of the power, he calls him the MINISTER of God;——He that beareth not the sword in vain,—a REVENGER to execute wrath upon him that doth evil, (ver. 4.). There can nothing be plainer than this; and it is as plain, that he speaks immediately of the rulers who then were. For (ver. 1.) he calls them powers

THAT
THAT BE (οὐσαί a word denoting real and present existence); Powers that ARE ordained: And, all along, he speaks of the powers and power in the present time; as persons then actually in office. Accordingly, he inculcates subjection in its several parts; as the duty of these very Christians then in Rome, and as a present duty: While (ver. 6, 7.) he says unto them, Pay YOU tribute,—Render tribute,—Custom,—Fear,—Honour. And that Paul should enjoin, or they undertake the present performance of such things, except toward present rulers,—is altogether absurd and inconceivable.

And now, that the Spirit of God, by Paul, did here enjoin civil subjection in its full latitude and all its parts, upon the Christians then in Rome, toward rulers then in the Roman empire,—is so certain and manifest, that it must be astonishing if any doubt were entertained anent it.

IV. The reasons of this duty, which are here improven, come next to be considered. And these are generally two: The first whereof lies in the original institution of Civil Magistrates, (ver. 1, 2.); and the second in their duty and administration, (ver. 3, 4, 6.).

And it must be first observed, that to refuse any thing already proven (particularly the precept of subjection, ver. 1, 5, 7.), as having an immediate respect unto Magistrates in the concrete, and these in the Roman empire,—upon pretence of any insuperable difficulty in applying unto them what is asserted in the Reasons of Subjection now before us; not only implies an heavy reflection upon the Apostle, as writing falsehood or no way to the purpose: But, it is a plain and open abuse of these very reasons. For it is essential unto the nature of reasons,—that they suppose it to be already concluded upon, what the thing is for which they are advanced; otherways they are advanced for nothing, or we know not for what,—and so are no reasons at all, can have no light in them, nor cast light upon any thing. Thus, in the present case, before the reasons of the command be noticed,—it must first be determined who are the objects of the command, what is the duty commanded, and who are the objects of that duty. The reasons must suppose these things to be al-
ready determined; and, therefore, can give no help in determining them: And when the determination is once made, no objection can be brought from the reasons against it; because, in the nature of the thing, it must be the standard for trying the reasons,—and not they for trying it, but only for illustrating and confirming it. The sense, then, of these reasons [ver. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6.], must be regulated by the things already proven: And to proceed otherways, is to wrest these dictates of the Holy Ghost, to cast the whole matter loose; and most unreasonably deny Scripture that common justice which all language requires. Moreover, it is certain,—that civil subjection, in its full latitude and all its parts, is here enjoined upon the Christians then in Rome, toward rulers then in the Roman empire; and this has been so far manifested,—that there is no room left, in any event, for coming back upon it. If, therefore, there should seem any insuperable difficulty in applying unto such Magistrates the characters here given of the higher powers; nothing remains unto one, who would deal reverently with the oracles of God,—but to believe the certain evidence that these indeed are the persons meant, and to rest in an humble confession of ignorance as to how they come to be so spoken of. However, that in these reasons the Apostle doth no way contradict or darken the command of subjection, as respecting these Roman powers,—by advancing any thing which was not applicable unto them; is sufficiently plain. For,

1mo, The first reason of subjection lies in the original institution of Civil Magistrates, (as expressed ver. 1.); For there is no power but of God, the powers that be are ordained of God. Here then it is asserted, That the powers that BE (viz. the rulers presently in the Roman empire) are ordained of God. Yea, it is farther asserted,—That there is NO power (viz. no Civil Magistrate) but of God, viz. in a way of ordination. Now this says not, that men who are of a superior place in civil society by bare possession or mere force,—are, as such, ordained of God: For these are not powers in a moral sense, and the text speaks only of all that are so; or of all those who are in the possession and exercise of magistracy by the will and consent of
of civil society, as these only do properly fall under the denomination of Magistrates.

Such, yea all such, are here said to be ordained of God. And they are so, not merely in respect of providential dispensation; but also of preceptive institution. For the remainder of natural light, in the moral dictates of right reason, is the natural and eternal law of God: Now this divine law not only endues men, in their present estate, with a natural inclination to Civil Society and Government; but it prescribes unto them an indispensible necessity of erecting and maintaining the same in some form, as a moral duty,—the obligation and benefit whereof no wickedness in them can loose or forfeit. And therefore, wherever they voluntarily constitute or consent unto any form of Civil Government, under the rule of any particular persons,—whatever sin be in the circumstances of this their deed, with respect to the Government or Governors which they constitute or consent unto; yet the deed itself, or the substance of the deed,—is always in consequence of, and agreeable to God’s law: Wherefore their Governors, as such and in the substance of the matter, are ordained of God according to that law.

And this is that divine ordination which the Apostle ascribes to all Magistrates as such; and, particularly, unto these of his day in the Roman empire: While, whatever distinguishing qualifications or approbation God may bestow upon some; yet no Civil Magistrates in the world can have any other sort of divine ordination. And, as this did belong unto these Roman Magistrates, justly therefore does the Apostle argue, with application to them (ver. 2.); That whosoever resisteth the power (viz. the Civil Magistrate, as such) resisteth the ordinance of God: And they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation; or be condemned on this account.

2do, The second reason of subjection lies in the duty and administration of Civil Magistrates (as expressed, vers. 3, 4, 6.); For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God unto thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the
sword in vain: For he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil.——For they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

Now, for laying open the force of this reason,—and obviating any seeming difficulty, in applying the things here said unto Magistrates, particularly such as ruled among the Romans in Paul’s day; the following considerations may suffice.

1. The public good of outward and common order in all reasonable society, unto the glory of God, is the great and only end which these invested with Magistracy can propose; in a sole respect unto that office. And as, in prosecuting this end civilly, according to their office, it is only over mens good and evil works that they can have any inspection; so, it is only over these which they must needs take cognizance of, for the said public good: While, at the same time, their doing so must be in such a manner, and proceed so far allenarly, as is requisite for that end; without assuming any Lordship immediately over mens consciences, or making any encroachment upon the special privileges and business of the Church. And moreover, as the whole institution and end of their office are cut out by, and lie within the compass of natural principles; it were absurd to suppose, that there could or ought to be any exercise thereof towards its end, in theforesaid circumstances, but what can be argued for and defended from natural principles: as indeed there is nothing especially allotted and allowed unto Magistrates, by the word of God and the confessions of the reformed Churches, but what can be so. Now, it must be agreeably to all THIS, that the Apostle signifies Magistrates to be God’s Ministers for good; concerning themselves with good and evil works,—in a way of terror, praise, or revenge: For he does so in a sole respect unto their civil office*.

2. What

*The doctrine set forth in this paragraph is of a fundamental nature, with respect to the whole other principles contained in the present Declaration and Defence; nor can these principles properly rest, upon a more superficial or narrower foundation. And it is a special excellence of the Secession-Testimony, that it contains such principles; which the Associate Presbytery was very unexpectedly called forth to declare and defend, by the controversy which Mr Nairn introduced among them: Principles, unto the establishing of which—reason and religion do beau—


tifully
2. What the apostle thus ascribes unto Magistrates, is in some measure competent unto all such, in every nation or state; and it always was so, particularly unto these in the Roman Empire of whom he immediately speaks; as may be seen, Acts xxv. 16. True

tifully concur; as to these natural rights of mankind, in civil society which were not so properly understood or acknowledged in some former periods. And perhaps they are the first ecclesiastical court that was ever led to explain and inculcate, in such a particular and extensive manner,—the doctrines and duties held forth in the word of God, as to the business of Christians with the civil governments under which they live.

The writer of this account is the only person now remaining in the Associate Synod, who had special occasion to be acquainted with the precise intention upon which the several terms of the above-paragraph (with the other terms of this Declaration and Defence) were originally laid. He does not mean any other intention than what the words themselves, when properly weighed, do naturally and necessarily suggest. But as this may not be so readily adverted unto, in a cursory reading of what is purposely concise and comprehensive; he offers the following paraphrase and explication of it.

1. The great end of Magistracy is the public good of society; distinguished from all interfering private interests: The public good of outward order; as not versant, like the Gospel-ministry, about the disorders of men’s hearts:—And the public good of common order in all reasonable society; not only in the general society of the nation or commonwealth, but also in all the particular societies comprehended within the same, civil or religious,—so far as these do not strike, according to the principles of right reason, against the peace and welfare of the general society: that each may enjoy the benefit of the Magistrate’s office, for preserving such order as is common to all; according as each partakes of the common nature of society. And this great end of the Magistrate’s office, is the only end that he can propose;—that he can equitably and justly propose, in a sole respect unto that office; whatever other good ends he may propose to himself, in respect to any other character which he bears. All which public good is ultimately unto the glory of God, as the universal sovereign of the world; an acknowledgment of whose Being and Government, lies at the root of all confidence and duty in human society: while this acknowledgment is also made, at least materially, in all that maintenance of good order.

2. These invested with magistracy are to prosecute the above-mentioned end of their office, according to the nature of it, civilly; in such ways as agree to the nature of civil society, without subordinating any religious institutions or ordinances to that end: In doing which, it is only over men’s good and evil works (comprehending works of the tongue, as well as hand) that they can have any inspection; without pretending to any control of mens judgments, hearts or thoughts: And this inspection is only over these good and evil works of men which they must needs take cognizance of for the said public good; so that they
True indeed, the advantage in this case lies very far on the side of such—as have occasion to exercise their office for promoting the Church’s public good; while at the same time they are privileged with (and endeavour to discharge their other special business as well as this, according to)

are not to interfere with any of mens works, in which the public good of society is not properly concerned—At the same time, their jurisdiction about mens works must be in such a manner, and proceed so far only as is requisite for the said public good; only in a civil manner, as above-expressed,—and without proceeding so far as to serve the purposes of resentment or private interest, beside or beyond the public good. Thus, the Magistrate must not assume any Lordship immediately over mens consciences; in offering to make himself a judge of mens religious principles: Nor must he encroach upon the special privileges and business of the Church; by assuming a cognizance of mens religious conduct or behaviour, farther than the public good of society is concerned,—while all other cognizance thereof belongs particularly to the Church-State.

3. It is to be considered, that the whole institution of the Magistrate’s office lies in natural principles; being no way founded in the revelation of grace, nor at all peculiar to such as enjoy the benefit of that revelation. And accordingly, the whole end of his office must be understood as cut out by the same natural principles; so that it cannot, in any part or degree, extend beyond the compass thereof. It were therefore absurd to suppose, that any exercise of that office were competent unto or incumbent upon the Civil Magistrate, precisely as such,—other than what can be argued for and defended from natural principles; without having recourse to any principles of revealed religion, for the rule or measure of his magistratical administration.

But all this is obviously meant of what the Magistrate owes unto all his subjects in common,—and of how he is to proceed with them, by way of necessary jurisdiction: That, in all such matters, his procedure is not to be according to the rule or measure of revealed, but of natural principles. Whereas in matters which are optional and arbitrary to the supreme Magistrate, with respect to his subjects,—and what must be confined to some of them, as the employing of persons in public trust under him, (which none can claim as their natural or birth-right, by their not being so employed): The Christian Magistrate ought to determine himself, not merely by natural,—but also by revealed or Christian principles; while all the concerns of earthly kingdoms, with all the influence that is competent to every civil station, so far as consistent with the nature thereof,—should be subservient to the kingdom of CHRIST. And this is the case; as to all that countenancing and encouraging of the true friends of the Christian state—which he is very eminently and effectually capable of; with all the discountenancing and discouraging of the enemies of that state, which he is as eminently and effectually capable of; without any encroachment on their natural or birth-right privileges, upon religious accounts.
ing to) the full discovery which God’s word hath made,—of these natural principles that comprehend the due exercise of their office, as well as its institution and end. However, as all Magistrates have still enjoyed some discovery of these, in the dictates of reason; and as they have always had occasion, and been obliged to improve the same, for the good of civil and natural society, in what the Apostle here describes: So there never were, nor could be any Magistrates or persons in civil power by the will of their people, but in whose administration something of this took place; in so much as thereby God has been pleased to preserve some external order and equity in the world,—and to restrain mankind from becoming altogether as the fishes of the sea, the greater devouring the less. And this was now the case, with reference to these Roman Magistrates whom the Apostle has particularly in his eye.

3. The Apostle is here speaking of these rulers—allenarly as such; abstracting from every other view of them, either good or bad. For every thing he says of them was truly and only verified, in their civil office and administration. Thus he says not a word, nor any way enters into the question,—anent their personal characters or qualifications, moral or religious; though undoubtedly there was, at least, much evil about them in this respect. Again, he takes no manner of notice anent their being chargeable with any Mal-administrations; either in a way of omission or commission: Though yet it was certain that there never were nor could be any Magistrates, either wholly or near wholly free of these; and without having much or any thing in their administration, besides what precisely answers the fair character he now gives of them therein. It is evident, then, that the Apostle, without refusing that there were many other, and many contrary things to be said anent them,—speaks of them allenarly as rulers; or as in the lawful possession of ruling power, and in so far as truly exercising the same. In a word,—though there were many things different, odious and opposite to be seen about them; yet he does not pursue his present consideration of them any farther than as they were truly wearing, and found walking within the proper com
pass and limits of magistracy. Their practice did not always answer these things; their actual attendance thereunto was far from being continual: But these things were true, and always true of them,—considered in the lawful possession of, and so far as truly exercising civil power; their attendance, in this respect, was continually unto these very things,—because altogether confined thereunto. And now the Apostle was, at this time, directed by the Spirit of God to represent Magistrates purely in the above shape; and that for very good reasons and wise purposes, \textit{viz.}

(1.) His proper scope toward the Romans here, was to inculcate upon them the duty of subjection unto Magistrates; and this could not lead him out to consider such any other way, than precisely as such.

(2.) For satisfying the Romans anent the reasonableness and necessity of subjection unto Magistrates, nothing could be more serviceable than the description he now gave of them; while it manifests how wholesome, valuable and necessary are the purposes of their institution and true administration; wherewith alone subjection properly concurs: And his confining himself, at present, unto this description,—was a very fit mean for getting a due regard unto their office, and unto them in their true possession and exercise thereof, so rivetted upon the minds of these Romans; as it might not be extinguished by, but over-balance any temptation they could be under,—to refuse them due obedience, on account of what gross evils they were otherways chargeable with.

(3.) It is evident that while the Apostle discourses, in the present case, about Magistrates purely as such,—without noticing any thing good or bad anent their private character and qualifications, moral or religious; or anent their Mal-administrations: his design was to let the Romans see, that however deep a concern they otherways had with them, in these personal respects; yet, in the case of subjection unto their lawful commands, they were to abstract from all consideration of them except as such,—or as truly possessing and exercising civil power; confining themselves unto this view of them allenarly.

(4.) At the same time the manner of the Apostle’s argument was calculated for discovering unto the Romans— the
the whole cases wherein they had any concern with Magistrates by way of subjection, viz. in so far only as they answer the characters here given: And it was farther calculated, for cautioning the Romans against carrying subjection the length of any sinful compliance with them. For as, in the matter of subjection, the Romans had ado only with the true concerns of their public office: So whatever personal evils they were chargeable with,—whether in their private character or conduct, or in their Mal-administrations (as the evils thereof cannot cleave unto their office but their persons); all these they were to oppose, contend and testify against;—according to their callings, knowledge and access. And the Apostle not only leaves room for all this, but implicitly holds out the necessity thereof; while he prescribes and admits of no compliance with them, save in the cases expressed.

And now it is altogether evident that, in the reasons of subjection (vers. 1.—4. 6.) the Apostle is so far from contradicting or darkening the command of subjection unto the higher powers (vers. 1. 5. 7.), as immediately respecting the Roman powers or Magistrates of his day,—by advancing any thing that was not applicable to them; that on the contrary, by these reasons and what is advanced therein,—he notably explains, illustrates and establishes that command, in reference to these powers: So as he could not have discoursed thereanent in any shape more suitable and pat to the purpose.

Moreover when the Apostle charged and persuaded the Christians in Rome—to subject themselves unto the Roman Magistrates; he thereby obliged them to conclude, not only that all other Christians and people in the Roman Empire were bound unto the same thing; but also, that whatever Magistrates any civil state acknowledged—were to be thus subjected unto throughout the same. For the Roman Magistrates could have no title in this case, but what was common unto all these in their several dominions; nor any better title, in respect to Christians than others: and so the reasons, whereby the Apostle urgeth subjection to the Roman Magistrates, were as pleable, unto the same extent, in the case of all these other; as indeed he signifies by the general assertion, There is no power but
of God. Accordingly, when the rule of duty that has been insisted on was specially directed unto all the Christians in Rome; it was also (in the general nature and essential design of Holy Scripture) given forth as a rule of duty unto all Christians in the world: Plainly teaching that all men, but they especially, ought to be subject, not only for wrath but also for conscience sake,—unto all Magistrates presently acknowledged by the civil state they belong to; and that in every lawful administration: As, at the same time, they are bound to contend and testify against all the corruptions and evils, private or public, wherewith any of these Magistrates are chargeable; and that according to their callings, knowledge and access. Now this is all and no more than what the Presbytery affirms, with respect to the present Civil Government; as plainly taught in this passage of the Epistle to the Romans.

Argument V. From Tit. iii. 1.

The fifth precept that shall be improven for the establishment of this principle, is expressed Tit. iii. 1. Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey Magistrates; to be ready to every good work.

It is quite undeniable that, in these words, the Apostle strictly charges Titus to inculcate or press upon the Christians then in Crete,—the duty of universal subjection and obedience, only in matters lawful, unto Magistrates who then were in the Roman empire.

1. They, upon whom he is charged to inculcate the duty of subjection and obedience, were the Christians then in Crete; for it was among them that Titus laboured in the work of the gospel, and them only could he now put in mind.

2. He is charged to press upon them the duty of universal subjection and obedience, only in lawful matters; for this is plainly the amount of being subject and obeying, in a way of readiness unto every good work: Which is a thing quite different from, and opposite unto any sinful compliances.

3. He is charged to inculcate upon them the duty of such subjection and obedience, unto Magistrates who then were in the Roman empire. For it is expressly Magistrates,
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whom the Apostle points out as the objects of this duty: And it must be these also whom he calls principalities and powers, see (beside some reasons advanced to this purpose on Rom. xiii. 1.), it is self-evident,—that the civil subjection and obedience here intended, being actually the same, cannot have different objects. Again, it is not so much as supposable that, at this time, either Paul should intend, or Titus press, or they should practice subjection and obedience,—unto any Magistrates, but such as then were: And, as these Cretians belonged to the Roman empire; the Magistrates in that empire, then being, must needs be specially respected in the charge here given to Titus.

How deep a concern the Apostle entertained and recommends to Titus, anent the up-stirring of these Christians unto subjection and obedience, in matters lawful, to the foresaid Magistrates,—is evident at the first reading of this text: And as the same runs parallel unto, and confirms the whole interpretation of the other passage [Rom. xiii. 1. etc.]; so, for such reasons as are thereupon advanced, it must be understood as equally applicable unto all people,—with reference to whatever Magistrates are over them, by consent of the Civil State they belong to. Upon the whole, it is undeniable,—that Paul here charges Titus to teach and preach that very same principle, which this Presbytery maintain with reference to the present Civil Government.

Argument VI. From 1 Pet. ii. 13,—17.

The last Precept that shall be argued from to this purpose, is exhibited by the Apostle Peter. As he takes notice (2 Epist. iii. 16.) that, in Paul's Epistles, there are some things hard to be understood; which they that are unlearned, and unstable, wrest: So he takes care to prevent this, particularly in respect of the passages that have been considered; while he gives notable explication and confirmation thereunto, by what is expressed 1 Epist. ii. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.

What is spoken in these verses, to the present case, hath been mostly met with already; all that needs to be said farther, shall be comprehended in the remarks following.

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1. That the Apostle is here speaking immediately of persons in power,—particularly such as then were, or could then be submitted unto; cannot be refused, without an open contradiction unto and contempt of holy Scripture.

2. He gives an infallible, and the only habile mark, whereby to know what persons in power were ordained of God; while he teaches (ver. 13.) That all those who are the ordinance of man, or who have a constitution by the consent of civil society, are to be submitted unto for the Lord's sake,—or, as having an institution from him.

3. What is to be understood [Rom. xiii. 1. and Tit. iii. 1.] is here expressed, viz. a distinction of these persons in power, or Magistrates, into supreme and subordinate, ver. 13, 14. The King is supreme (a word of the same derivation and meaning with Sovereign, as they can differ only in sound and grammatical construction,—both signifying, in this case, the Chief Civil Magistrate); while Governors are sent by him, and so subordinate unto him.

4. He determines the whole matter in respect of which they were to be submitted unto, viz. The punishment of evil doers, and the praise of them that do well, ver. 14. However seldom they were inclined or employed this way,—yet the supreme power of the King, and the commission of Governors, could morally extend no farther: And thus it was only in so far as employed this way, that the King was to be considered as supreme—and Governors as sent by him; and both submitted to accordingly.

5. The Apostle plainly supposes [ver. 15.,] that Christians were then charged with non-submission to the King and Governors; though but ignorantly by foolish men, probably because they refused sinful compliances: He therefore informs them of the will of God,—That, notwithstanding their Christian freedom, they should put these persons to silence; by outshining them in submission as to well-doing. And he gives a notable enforcement unto this duty, by telling [ver. 16.,] That in neglecting the same (on however specious pretences),—they would not be using their Christian liberty as the servants of God, but for a cloak of maliciousness; or, to palliate some venom of their own spirits.

6. He
6. He orders them to yield such submission, without farther question, to every ordinance of man; every person in civil office by the will of society. And,

7. That he might prevent their scrupling to do so, on account of the unworthiness or wickedness of any of these persons; he teaches,—That submission to them in well-doing, or in matters lawful, should be studied for the Lord’s sake. If they were to look no higher than the persons of these men, their hearts might readily become quite alienated from any actual connection with them: But it was necessary they should look up unto, and reverence God’s institution in the office these persons bore; and his sovereign will in chusing to make any use of them, for maintaining any thing of public order that was to be found in the world. And thus, being weaned from their own spirits, and walking in self-denial,—they behoved to cherish any thing just in the Civil Administration; by submitting thereunto, from the powerful consideration of their being obtested to do this much for the Lord’s sake: Yea to do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; while this can no way interfere with a due Testimony against prevailing evils, or with due endeavours for reformation.

Finally, What the Apostle here said unto the Christians of his day, doth equally agree unto the case of all; with respect to whatever Magistrates are sustained by the civil body whereof they are members: And this is all that the Presbytery affirms in the present case.

And now it fully appears, what is the harmonious and indubitable verdict of Scripture-precepts, upon the question in debate, viz. That all persons, and particularly the Lord’s people, ought to render subjection and obedience in all matters lawful, unto any Magistrate who is, and while he is acknowledged as such by the Civil State they belong to; being what is every way consistent, yea connected with due faithfulness, in reference to these corruptions wherewith the Magistrates may be chargeable.

The clearest evidence hath been given, that this duty (which was, upon the matter, originally taught by the fifth Commandment), was also, by some precepts branched out therefrom, expressly inculcated upon the Jewish people from one generation to another; and even after they were
were incorporated with the Roman State: Yea moreover, that besides the continued doctrine of these precepts, the Holy Ghost has been more especially at pains by some others,—for preventing any transgression, neglect or forgetfulness of this duty among Christians. And as that principle which the Presbytery here asserts, consisteth merely in a particular maintenance of this duty; it is sufficiently manifest, that the said principle only maintains a duty which is expressly taught by Scripture-precepts: Yea, that singular care has been, all along, taken in Scripture,—for keeping this principle alive, in the faith and practice of the Lord’s people.

Argument VII. From the Conformity of the Precepts insisted on, with other Scriptures.

After all, it is affecting and astonishing, to see any opposition made unto such an open and special design of the Holy Ghost in Scripture; and that under a profession of regard to these holy oracles. The precepts which have been insisted upon speak so expressely, so certainly, so loudly, according to the interpretation that has been given of them,—plainly remonstrating against any other; that there is no manner of room left for hesitating thereanent,—even though a person should remain difficulted, in apprehending the consistency thereof with any other passages of Scripture.

But so it is, that no necessity hereof can occur; unless a person will procure it unto himself. For,

I. In the first place, there is no passage of Scripture that so much as seems openly inconsistent with these precepts, as now interpreted; while no passage so much as seems openly to forbid what is here expressly commanded, or to command any thing directly opposite thereunto. And it must be a very intolerable abuse of Scripture, to attempt warding off the notable light and force of these precepts,—by passages that do not so much as seem directly opposite or contradictory; while, even though they did so, they ought to be explained in an agreeableness to such direct and indubitable precepts. But,

II. In the next place, as there are many other passages of Scripture plainly homologating these precepts, in the genuine
genuine sense that has been assigned them; so there are none which it is not very obvious, that accordingly they are noways inconsistent with. If there were any, they behoved to be placed among approved examples, or doctrines, or precepts, or promises, or threatenings; some way related to the general subject in hand: But none such can there be found. For,

1. There are no approved examples, in the conduct of civil members towards Magistrates,—whereof these precepts, as now stated, offer to disapprove.

2. Again, there are doctrines and precepts, expressly or implicitly determining the duty of a Civil State,—as to what sort of Magistrates they should set up and seek after; and there are some imitable examples recorded, of faithfulness and reformation this way: All which doctrines, precepts and examples are here uncontroverted; in full agreeableness to what has been affirmed. And it is very obvious, that the above precepts, in their foresaid genuine sense, are noways inconsistent therewith. For, as these precepts do plainly enjoin different duties upon different objects; teaching us separately to yield separate obedience, only in matters lawful, to whatever Magistrates the Civil State actually sustains; so whatever defects in or defections from their duty foresaid, the State be otherways chargeable with,—it is plain such obedience only homologates that part of their said duty which they perform: While we are, at the same time, left indispensibly bound and evidently free to exert ourselves, by all habile means, in testifying against these their evils; and for getting them convinced of, and reconciled unto the whole extent of their duty, in this matter.

In the next place, there are doctrines and precepts, expressly or implicitly determining the qualifications and duties of Magistrates,—as to what they should be and do; and there are some imitable examples recorded, of singular attainments this way: All which doctrines, precepts and examples are here also uncontroverted; in full agreeableness to what has been affirmed. And it is also very obvious, that the above precepts, in their foresaid genuine sense, are noways inconsistent therewith. For,

(1.) As
(1.) As these precepts do plainly speak to different persons, and anent different things; so, on the one hand, the passages holding forth these qualifications and duties of Magistrates do not, by the remotest hint, imply,—That if any way they be deficient in or make defection from the same, their authority and commands, even in matters lawful, must not be subjected unto and obeyed: And, on the other hand, these precepts holding forth the duties of subjects, as above-stated,—do never, by the remotest consequence, imply any dispensing with those qualifications and duties of Magistrates, or any countenancing of their defects and defections; but, on the contrary, they leave us bound and in full room, to testify against the same,—and essay their reformation, by all methods that are habile for us. As,

(2.) Magistrates are here always supposed to be in the actual and due possession of these needful and natural abilities, which are common among men. Again, they are here always supposed to be actually possessing and performing these moral and acquired qualifications which they ought to have, and these duties which are incumbent upon them; at least, in some useful and continued degree: For all this is always in Scripture, and by all people, implied in the essential notion of Magistrates.

Therefore it is only in respect of the DUE Measure and Performance of these qualifications and duties, that Magistrates can be understood as at any time chargeable with defects or defections. Now this is indeed such, as without having attained and engaging unto the same, at least in some hopeful and promising way,—no Civil State ought to invest any with magistracy. But then, SUCH a Measure and Performance of these qualifications and duties— cannot be required for the BEING of the Magistrate’s office; either as essential to it, or as a condition of it sine qua non. First, it cannot be required as essential thereunto: For then it would be the same thing with magistracy,—which is grossly absurd and big with absurdities. In the next place, it cannot be required as a condition thereof sine qua non; or without which one is not really a Magistrate, however far sustained as such by civil society: For then no person could be really a Magistrate, unless he were
Of the Authority

were so faultlessly. And this is a proposition (which Mr Nairn’s scheme necessarily lands in, if it come to any thing at all, and) which is so very dangerous,—that it opens a door for throwing off all relative duties, toward any that are not faultless in their relative capacity. By this way of reasoning, it will follow,—that servants are not to obey their masters, while undutiful: Though yet the Spirit of God says (1 Pet. ii. 18.), Servants be subject to your masters, with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

It is manifest, therefore, that the due measure and performance of scriptural qualifications and duties,—belongs not to the being and validity of the Magistrate’s office; but to the WELL-BEING and Usefulness thereof. But an acknowledgment of the Magistrate’s authority in lawful commands, doth only homologate the being and validity of his office, while sustained by the State: Wherefore this acknowledgment can never be inconsistent with the necessity of these qualifications and duties; can never palliate any defects in or defections from the same; and can never encroach upon the necessity or due extent of testifying against these defects or defections, and of essaying the reformation of Magistrates in our several places and callings.

3. Farther, there are, in Scripture,—several promises of good, reformed, reforming Magistrates; and of deliverance to the Lord’s people from any grievance they presently ly under, in the want thereof: But these promises can never belong to the rule of duty. A promise of the greatest future good, can be no warrant for spurning at the least present good: Yea, the cherishing any good which is presently bestowed, is the ready way of attaining all the good that is promised. Wherefore no promise anent Magistrates to come, can possibly interfere with the duty of subjecting to any thing lawful in the administration of Magistrates that presently are.

4. Finally, there are threatenings and curses pronounced against wicked Magistrates; and people concurring with them in their wickedness: But it is dreadful to suppose, that these are any way inconsistent with the duty toward Magistrates now pled for; as if God’s indignation against sinners,
Period II. of the present Civil Government.

sinners, did dissolve the obligation of relative duties betwixt them.

According to the observations that have been made, it will appear,—that no passage of Scripture doth in the remotest manner militate against the cause now managed. And now it is abundantly manifest,—That the principle which the Presbytery holds anent the present Civil Government, doth only maintain a duty that is expressly taught by Scripture-precepts.

Proof II. From Scripture Examples.

The Presbytery next proceed to declare, that,—The principle here asserted is likewise plainly held forth unto us by approven Scripture-examples, that are perpetually imitable. A condescending upon the multitude of particular instances that might be produced here, would swell vastly beyond the present design. It shall only be remarked, That,

I. The Old Testament history gives abundant and illustrious evidence to the matter in hand. For,

1. There cannot so much as one instance be found in all that history,—of any civil members refusing, either by word or deed, an acknowledgment of or subjection unto the authority and lawful commands of any Magistrate actually in office by will of the civil body; in a way of testifying against their defects or defections: And no examples, unless precisely of this kind, can in the least militate against the principle now defended. Wherefore,

To argue, in this case, from the example of conspiracies against the lives,—or of rejecting, in a way of open wickedness, the authority of Kings; would be both absurd and dreadful.

Moreover, there is an example of testifying against the politic body; in their undue choice of a King: As in the case of Jotham, Judg. ix. There is an example of testifying against, and withstanding the apostasy and wickedness of Kings: As in the case of Elisha [2 Kings iii. 14, 15.]; and of the Priests, 2 Chron. xxvi. 16,—20. There is an example of flying, for due self-preservation; as in
the case of Jotham [Judg. ix. 21.]: Of resisting, for just self-defence; as in the case of Elisha (2 Kings vi. 32.). And of espousing the just cause of the persecuted; as in the case of those who stood with David against Saul. Again, there is an example of one King casting off the yoke of another; as in the case of Hezekiah, 2 Kings xviii. 7. There is an example of the people’s doing justice to their rightful and injured King, against an usurping murderer; as in the case of Joash, 2 Kings xi. 11.—16. There is an example of the people’s submitting to the King’s son,—when the father was confined however to a separate house, according to the Ceremonial Law; as in the case of Uzziah, 2 Chron. xxvi. 21. Finally, there is an example of the people’s suspending a King from human government,—during the time that God’s judgment suspended him, however, from human society; as in the case of Nebuchadnezzar.—But it is evident at first view, that none of these examples (whether approven and imitable, or not) do any ways touch the present question.

What seems nearest the doing so, is the example of simple revolts: As from Rehoboam [2 Chron. x. 16.]; from Jeroboam [2 Chron. xi. 13.—17.]; from Baasha [2 Chron. xv. 9.]; and from Jehoram, 2 Chron. xxi. 10. Now there is no occasion here to controvert any of these examples; nor any need to enquire in what cases simple revolts are lawful, or in what not: For however this be, they are of a nature entirely distinct from the subject now in hand. The whole nature of any simple revolt, lies in breaking off immediately from the civil body; by withdrawing from, or withdrawing part of their territories: And then it necessarily follows, at the same time, that these revolters break off from the head of this civil body; without ever denying his authority over the members who still cleave unto the same.—And this is the precise nature of all these examples presently referred to. For we have not the remotest hint, that such as revolted from the foresaid Kings, by breaking off from the civil body wherein these Kings ruled,—did ever deny the obligation of their authority upon such as staid behind; or ever took up any testimony against any who staid behind, for subjecting unto any thing lawful in the administration of these Kings. And

it
it would be very ridiculous to argue, from a supposition of its being the duty of such as no more belonged to the Civil Body—to disown all authority of rulers therein; that therefore, it was the duty of such as still belonged to that body to do the same. Thus, the above examples can be no precedent for some few, still continuing members of the civil body (which they cannot but do, as long as living intermixed therewith), to refuse subjection in matters lawful to any Sovereign whom that body still sustains. So that, upon the whole, no example (whether approven and imitable, or not) in the least favouring that anti-government scheme now by some espoused, can be found throughout the history of the *Old Testament*. But,

2. It is obvious, even in a cursory perusal of that sacred history; that, during all the periods thereof, it was the general and constant practice of the Lord’s people,—to live in subjection and obedience to the authority of whatever Kings were acknowledged by the civil body whereof they were members, and that in any lawful administration. And this their practice in the kingdom of *Judah* did not arise from any extraordinary obligation they were under to the royal line of *David*; as is evident, particularly from their behaving after the same manner in the kingdom of *Israel*. Yea it is manifest that, before they were formed into a nation, they lived in the above sort of subjection and obedience unto the Kings of *Egypt*; and that they did so likewise to the *Babylonish* Kings, when afterwards scattered in captivity through their Empire.

3. This practice was never, at any time, charged upon the Jewish people as a sin. It is true indeed, that the body politic did sin very grievously; in the manner, time and circumstances of desiring that their government should be changed into a monarchical form: And for this they are expressly condemned; *1 Sam.* viii. 7, 8, and x. 19. As also, upon this account, the Lord gave them a King in his anger [*Hos.* xiii. 11.]; or they so provoked him, that he then with-held the special and distinguishing blessing wherewith they would otherwise have got a King. Moreover, we find that the body politic were condemned for the frequent and heinous sin, of not consulting the Lord in making choice of their Kings; while he complained (*Hos.* viii. 4.), *They have set up Kings, but not by me:*

> they
be dreadful to infer from these passages, that Kingly Government itself, in the form and authority thereof,—was condemned, or inflicted as a judgment: seeing the Lord gave special directions and encouragement thereanent [Deut. xvii. 14.—20.]; special orders for Samuel, to give actual compliance with the people’s desire thereof, (viz. as to the matter though not the manner of their desire, 1 Sam. viii. 7. 9.); seeing also he gave special approbation thereunto, by an extraordinary choice of some Kings for them;—and not only vouchsafed to give them some special promises anent Kings, but likeways threatened them with the want of Kings as a special judgment, Hos. iii. 4.

Moreover, though we read of wicked Kings, who had wicked reigns,—in Judah and Israel, as well as in Egypt and Babylon; and though the Lord did, from time to time, send forth Prophets,—with a special commission for causing the people of Judah and Israel to know their abominations, yea for shewing them all their abominations; particularly, as to what was at any time amiss, in their setting up and complying with Kings: Yet there can no instance be produced, of any among that people being at any time condemned,—for yielding subjection and obedience in matters lawful, unto the worst of these Kings who ruled over them by the will of the civil body whereunto they at any time, belonged; whether in their own land or elsewhere: Or, which is the same thing,—it cannot be found that ever they were blamed; because a testimony against the wickedness of any Kings they continued to live under, was never carried the length of disowning and disobeying their authority,—even in lawful administrations. Yea,

4. The practice of owning and obeying the authority of all these Kings, in such circumstances,—was what the Jewish people were, all along, encouraged unto and countenanced in; by the example of Prophets and eminent servants of God. David, even when wickedly persecuted by Saul, and lawfully providing for his own safety,—did utter and frequently repeat an express and humble acknowledgment of his office and authority; 1 Sam. xxiv and xxvi. Afterwards the Prophets, both in Judah and Israel,
Israel, when speaking anent or unto the Kings who reigned there,—did always acknowledge or homologate their office and authority: So that, amidst all the faithfulness and freedom of speech they ever used, in testifying against the wickedness of any of these Kings,—and of such as sinfully complied with them; they never gave the people the least ground to question their office and authority, in any just administrations;—but, on the contrary, their behaviour was calculated for preventing any the least suspicion thereanent; and for confirming the people in due obedience to the same.

And it is especially remarkable to this purpose, that, as the Prophet Elijah sustained the office and authority of Ahab over the people [1 Kings xviii. 19.]; so (when the hand of the Lord was on him) he honoured Ahab before the people [vers. 46.]: And all this, notwithstanding of what is said, Chap. xvi. 30.—33. and Chap. xviii. 18. And also, that the Prophet Jeremiah did expressly own the office and authority of Zedekiah [Jer. xxxvii. 20.]; even though this King was lying under the wicked character and woful curse, which are declared, 2 Kings xxiv. 19, 20. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 12, 13. and Ezek. xvii. 13.—21. Moreover, when the seed of Israel sojourned in Egypt; they were encouraged unto and countenanced in an acknowledgment of the Egyptian Kings, by the example of Joseph. And afterwards, when they were carried captive unto the country of Babylon; as the letter sent by Jeremiah (Chap. xxix. 4—7.) did imply a call for them to sit down under the wings of Civil Government in that country, and to yield obedience unto any lawful administration thereof, (by which call, to alledge that God dispensed for a time with his own law, is blasphemous): So they were, all along, countenanced in and encouraged unto this practice,—by the examples of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaell, Azariah, Ezra, Nehemia, Mordecai and Esther; who enjoyed places under, or received commissions from the Babylonian and Persian Monarchs. Nor can it any way prejudice the present argument, to alledge that the above-mentioned persons were extraordinary: For as they had no extraordinary warrant for the foresaid practice; so therein they were imitated by all the rest of the people,—

who
who could not all be extraordinary persons, and were never charged with any error in this matter.

II. It is now time to remark, that though the New Testament (agreeably to its nature and design) doth not profess to lay before us any formed course of civil transactions; it nevertheless affords evidence that, in the days of our Lord and his Apostles,—the general and approven practice, relative unto the principle now maintained, continued to run in the same channel as before.

It would be superfluous to prove, that the Jewish people, who had before this time been subdued,—had also by this time submitted themselves unto the Roman Emperors; accepting protection from, and yielding obedience to their government. And, with reference to Christians in this period, it may be noticed that,

1. The Apostle Paul, conform to his own doctrine,—did acknowledge, honour and submit unto the authority of the Roman Magistrates, supreme and subordinate. He acknowledged Felix for a judge unto the Jewish nation; so as he professed cheerfulness, in answering for himself before him, Acts xxiv. 10. He stood before the judgment-seat of Festus, pleading that he had not offended any thing against Caesar, Acts xxv. 8. He thought himself happy, in having access to answer for himself before King Agrippa, Acts xxvi. 2. And downwards in that chapter it appears, what honour he put upon Festus and Agrippa before the people.—Moreover, when pleading that he ought to be judged at the judgment-seat of Caesar, he actually appealed unto Caesar, Acts xxv. 10, 11. By which deed, according to the very nature of it,—he plainly acknowledged Caesar's office and authority; and that before the people. And, as no sort of constraint could have warranted such a deed, had it been any way in itself sinful; so the constraint he was under in this case, was what the nature of an appeal supposes, viz. a moral constraint, which not only allows but requires that the action be voluntary.

Nor do the Apostle's doctrine and practice, as above declared, bear the smallest inconsistency with what he writes, 1 Cor. vi. 1—8. For that which the Apostle there in some cases condemns [viz. pursuits at law], is a thing entirely distinct from civil subjection: Seeing,
though in these pursuits the Magistrate is acknowledged as such, yet they are no part of subjection to him: So that a person may always continue subject to civil commands, without ever turning a pursuer before civil courts; and, where subjection is a great duty, such pursuits may be a gross sin. Thus, in a perfect consistency with all the civil subjection now defended, it always continues to be utterly a fault; especially among Christians of a sound profession,—to entertain an unbrotherly, impatient and litigious behaviour; in going to law, or seeking decision of matters before civil courts, especially where the Magistrate is chargeable with infidelity or difference in religion: Without first using habile endeavours to have these matters decided in a way of private arbitration; and without rather taking wrong, or suffering themselves to be defrauded,—where it appears more agreeable to the principles of Christianity, and more for the credit thereof, to do so.

2. The Apostle’s exhortation, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. That first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made—for Kings and for all that are in authority, (as indeed they could not pray and give thanks for any but such as then were); that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty;—plainly supposes, that Christians were already beyond question about the office of these persons; whence, their endeavouring to lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty (which is also supposed), behoved to include subjection and obedience to these powers in matters lawful. Yea,

3. That such ought to be and actually was the general practice of Christians in this period, is farther manifested and clearly homologated [2 Pet. ii. 10. Jude, vers. 8.]; by the open condemnation of some wicked persons, in despising and speaking evil of dignified persons, or Civil Governors who ruled over them: As an application of these passages unto civil misdemeanors, cannot be evaded or evaded; and it was impossible that these persons could despise and speak evil of Civil Government, without extending such behaviour unto Civil Governors then in being.

What have been pled—are plain examples of yielding subjection and obedience, in matters lawful, to whatever Magistrates are acknowledged by the Civil State. These examples,
examples, when compared together, do carry along an evidence of approbation; but this is farther put beyond all doubt, by the concurring voice of these precepts that have been unfolded.—And now it is abundantly manifest, that the principle which the Presbytery holds anent the present Civil Government, doth only maintain an imitation of approven scripture examples; and is therefore plainly held forth unto us by the same.

**Proof III. From the perpetual Obligation and Imitableness of the Precepts and Examples insisted on.**

That these examples are perpetually imitable, would admit of separate proof; as approven Scripture-examples have the force of precepts unto us, in like circumstances. But no ground of doubt can remain here, if the precepts already explained, whereunto these examples correspond, be found of perpetual obligation.

That these precepts are of perpetual obligation, was asserted in entering upon the consideration thereof. And this was likewise evidenced, in finding all along,—that these precepts do properly enjoin obedience, in matters lawful, upon all persons; unto any Magistrate who is, and while he is acknowledged by the Civil State they belong to: As this is a general institution that, in the nature of the thing, cannot be limited by places,—times, or whatsoever transactions.

However, it may not be improper to subjoin here some farther evidence, that these precepts are of perpetual obligation. As,

I. Though Magistrates may differ vastly,—as to their qualifications, their faithfulness, their usefulness, and the blessing of God upon their government; yet the precepts already explained are a rule of duty,—equally toward any who are, and while they are acknowledged as Magistrates, by civil society. Nothing needs to be added for the clearing of this, but an overthrow of a distinction that has been made; of those who are acknowledged as Magistrates by civil society,—into such as are so by the preceptive will of God, and such as are so by his providential will only. Now as, by this distinction, these Magistrates are consider-
ed with respect to the origin of that office which they actually bear; so a distinction of them, in this respect, into preceptive and providential,—is altogether groundless and absurd. It will not be refused, that all such preceptive Magistrates are also providential; seeing it is the hand of Providence that brings every thing to pass: But moreover, all providential Magistrates are also preceptive; and that equally, in the above respect. That the conduct of all these may be very far from agreeing equally unto the precept, is granted; and in a perfect consistency with all that is here maintained: But the office and authority of them all, in itself considered,—does equally arise from, and agree unto the preceptive will of God. For

The *institution* of Civil Magistrates is allenarly by the preceptive will of God, as *the supreme Lord and King of all the world*: While, if the Magistrate derived his office properly from Christ as *Mediator*,—then it could not fail to be an evangelical, and so an erastian office. But, in opposition hereto, the kingdom of Christ is not of this world; though a right to have the kingdoms of this world rendered subservient and tributary to his spiritual kingdom in the visible Church, belongs to him as Mediator: And so, in subserviency to his mediatory kingdom,—the management of the kingdom of Providence, throughout the whole world, was put into the hands of Zion’s King, *Eph. i. 22, 23.* *Matth. xxviii. 18.* Moreover (besides what hath been said on *Rom. xiii. 1.* and *1 Pet. ii. 13.*) seeing the constitution of all Governments and Governors in the world contains, at least, a piece of order; it is strange to say, that the least order in the world is merely by the providential will of God,—and so merely by permission: While the voice of all reason and religion proclaims, that all order in the world is by the efficiency of God,—who is the God of order, and not of confusion; and so in an agreeableness to his preceptive will.

II. As the precepts that have been explained are a rule of duty, equally toward any who are and while they are acknowledged as Magistrates by civil society; so they are and continue a rule of duty in this matter, particularly to all the Lord’s people,—in all periods, places and cases. For moral precepts, according to their very nature, con-
continue always indispensible and actually binding; where there is the least occasion for obeying them. And as the word of God is delivered to us for a compleat and perpetual rule, not only of faith but of manners; so there is not the least hint in all Scripture,—that ever a time should come, or a case fall out, wherein the above precepts should not be a present rule: Nor is there any other sort of rule in all Scripture to walk by, in the matter of civil subjection and obedience; so that, if we reject the use of that rule, we reject all rule in the matter. Moreover, it is most absurd to suppose,—that the apostasy of King or people can render that civil obedience of a nature morally evil, which otherways would have been of a nature morally good. Apostasy is a heinous aggravation of sin, but it can never alter the nature of moral good and evil.

For the farther understanding of all this, it must be remembered,—that the right of a people to set up Civil Government, and chuse Magistrates unto themselves, is not a positive right; flowing immediately from the divine favour, approbation, or gospel-grace: But it is a natural moral right; flowing from the universal sovereignty of God, and the obligation of his eternal law: And thus it is a right that can never be forfeited in this world, unless men could forfeit their subjection to the law of God. Again, this moral obligation to set up Government and Governors, is morally incumbent upon the body of a people: And so their right to set up Government and Governors, is what they cannot forfeit by any wickedness; unless they could forfeit subjection to God. Moreover, our living freely intermixed with any politic body—doth necessarily bring us under a moral and indispensible tie unto civil communion with them; wherefore, while so living, we can never refuse this without refusing subjection to God: And this civil communion with them, as it can never respect any things but what are lawful,—can never involve us in any national guilt, apostasy or corruption.

The argument from Scripture precepts and examples has now proceeded so far, as may render it abundantly evident,—That the principle which the Presbytery here affirms, with respect to the present Civil Government, is agreeable to the plain tenor of Scripture. But moreover,
ARTICLE II.  The Agreeableness of the Presbytery’s Judgment to the Principles of all the Reformed Churches.

The Presbytery’s Principle anent the present Civil Government, as above declared and defended, is agreeable to the principles of all the reformed Churches; and particularly of this Church in her Confession and Covenants.

In passing forward unto the proof of this proposition it will not be improper to remark; That as the primitive Church, from the days of the Apostles unto the end of the third century, continued to have ado with heathen Magistrates; from whose hands she underwent such a tract of hardships, sufferings and deaths, for the name of Jesus,—as allowed her but seldom or short breathings: So the singular holiness, meekness, patience, faithfulness, zeal and courage wherewith Christians did then adhere unto and persevere in the profession of their faith,—detesting the least sinful compliance, and disdaining the greatest favours that could be thereby purchased; gave an ample testimony against the corruption and wickedness of these civil powers, and of the generations who therein concurred with them. But it cannot be found that ever any of these Christians impugned or disobeyed the office or authority of any such Magistrates, in any lawful administrations; while sustained by the civil body: And what institutions the ancient Fathers delivered, as to this case, we have a taste of,—in what of the same is cited by the reformed Church of Bohemia [in chap. xvi. of her Confession], viz. “If the master command these things that are not contrary to the holy Scriptures, let the servant be subject to the master:—If it be good which the Emperor commandeth, do the will of him that commandeth; if it be evil, answer, We ought rather to obey God than men.”

The sound doctrine here taught (being the very same with what is now defended), was retained and maintained by the famous Churches of the Reformation from Popery. And,
PROOF I. From the Principles of the Foreign reformed Churches.

This is evident, with reference to all these Churches beyond sea. None of them ever manifested the least deviation from ancient doctrine in the present matter: And, when the pestilent sectary of Anabaptists arose in Germany; some rejecting Magistracy, some Magistrates,—all under pretences of greater reformation; sundry of these Churches (in their Confessions of Faith) expressly managed a Testimony against them in so doing: As particularly the Church of Basil [Conf. art. xi.] condemn such their principles; under the notion of strange and erroneous doctrines, which turbulent or mobish spirits do bring forth.

But, more particularly, the principle now affirmed is plainly agreeable to what was maintained by the reformed Church of Helvetia [in her latter Confession of Faith, chap. xxx.], viz. “The Magistrate, of what sort soever, is ordained of God himself for the peace and quietness of mankind; and so that he ought to have the chief place in the world. If he be an adversary to the Church, he can hinder and disturb it much: But if he be a friend, and so a member of the Church; he is a most useful and excellent member thereof, who can be very profitable and excellently helpful unto her.—Let all the subjects honour and reverence the Magistrate, as the Minister of God: Let them love him, favour him, and pray for him, as for a father; let them also obey all his just and equitable commands: Finally, let them pay customs and tributes, and all other duties of this sort, faithfully and willingly.” And it is to be remembered, that this Confession was approven by several other reformed Churches; particularly by these of Geneva, Savoy, Poland, Hungary and Scotland.

Again, the principle now asserted is likeways plainly agreeable to what was taught in the reformed Church of Bohemia (as laid open by her Confession, chap. xvi.), viz. “It is taught here with us, according to the scriptures,—That the higher power, or the Civil Magistrate, is the ordinance of God; for governing the people in these

“things
“things which are political and temporary.—They teach likeways, That it is commanded by the word of God; that all persons be subject to the higher powers in all things, providing they be not contrary to God and his word: First indeed to your Royal Majesty” (viz. the German Emperor); “and next unto whatsoever others are placed in authority,—whether they be good, or unworthy and evil.”

Such doctrine may be seen more at large, in these Confessions: As also in the former Confession of Helvetia [art. xxvi.]; in the Confession of Basil [art. vi, xi.]; in the French Confession [art. xxxix, xl.]; in the Confession of Belgia [art. xxxvi.]; in the Confession of Augsburg [art. xvi.]; in the Confession of Saxony [art. xxiii.]; and in the Confession of Sweveland, chap. xxiii.

In a word, these reformed Churches,—as they had generally ado with Popish, and sometimes with persecuting powers; so their Confessions and conduct bore ample testimony against the corruptions and wickedness of these powers, and of the multitudes who therein concurred with them: But (amidst all temptations to the contrary) they were enabled to retain and vindicate the ancient principle anent subjection to Civil Magistrates; the very principle now affirmed, with reference to the present Civil Government. Moreover,

PROOF II. From the Principles of the Church of Scotland.

ARGUMENT I. From her Principles at the Reformation from Popery.

This same Principle was also plainly retained and maintained by the Church of Scotland, at the Reformation from Popery; as is evident from her approving of the Helvetick Confession, above-noticed: And more directly from our first Confession of Faith; as it manifestly speaks to the case of all Civil Governments through the world, in art. xxvi. “We confess and acknowledge empires, kingdoms, dominions and cities, to be distinguished and ordained by God; the power and authority in the same,—be it of Emperors in their empires, of Kings in
“their realms, Dukes and Princes in their dominions, and of other Magistrates in the cities,—to be God’s holy ordinance; ordained for manifestation of his own glory, and for the singular profit and commodity of mankind: So that whosoever goeth about to take away or to confound the whole state of civil policies, now long established; we affirm the same men, not only to be enemies to mankind, but wickedly to fight against God’s expressed will. We further confess and acknowledge, that such persons as ARE placed in authority are to be loved, honoured, feared, and holden in most reverend estimation.”

ARGUMENT II. From her Principles at the Reformation from Prelacy.

Farther, this same principle was also plainly retained and maintained in the Westminster Confession of Faith (chap. xxiii art. 4.), in these words: [“Infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the Magistrate’s just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to him”]: Which evidently amount to this,—That where a Magistrate hath authority by the will and consent of the body politic (this being what properly renders his authority just and legal, according to the word of God), infidelity or difference in religion doth not make void the said authority; nor free the people from an obligation to obey him in any lawful commands, which is all their due obedience. Now, to vindicate our Confession of Faith against the subversion of this passage; as if (according to Mr Nairn), it were simply to be understood of a land not reformed, where some that profess the true religion may have their lot and residence: It must be remarked that,

1. This interpretation says, That the same act of obedience to the same sort of Magistrate, which is morally good in one place, will be morally evil in another; which is a groundless and absurd imagination.

2. This interpretation charges our reformers with error, in receding from the Scripture-doctrine; as it plainly teacheth, That all Magistrates, every where, acknowledged by civil society, must be obeyed in all lawful commands:

And
And moreover, it charges this Church with retracting her former principles in this matter,—as above declared.

3. The said gloss represents our reformers as awfully and absurdly juggling with God and man; by confessing the faith of others, and not their own;—yea without telling that they did so, or telling what they maintained as the rule of their own practice in this matter: And all this under the solemnity of that Covenant-oath, in pursuance whereof the said Confession was made and maintained.

4. The whole Confession of Faith, and consequently the passage of it now pointed at,—was received by the Church of Scotland as truth, and that among us; which appears from the act of Assembly (August 27, 1647. sess. 23.), bearing this clause: “The General Assembly doth therefore, after mature deliberation, agree unto and approve the said Confession, as to the truth of the matter; and also as to the point of uniformity,—agreeing for our part, that it be a common Confession of Faith for the three kingdoms.” Moreover,

5. It were easy to manifest,—that the foresaid gloss upon the above-cited passage, overturns the connection of the whole 23d chapter of our Confession of Faith. But it is sufficient to notice, that the Magistrate there supposed to be an infidel, or of a different religion,—is, at the same time, plainly supposed to be even where a Christian Church takes place: For, after these words (nor free the people from their due obedience to him); it immediately follows, in the same sentence, “From which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted.” And this assertion is so general, that it holds out the case to be still the same, and leaves no room for exception; however far the Church and land be otherways reformed.

It is now manifest, that the principle held forth in our Confession (chap. xxiii. art. 4.), is the very same with what presently is affirmed by this Presbytery.

As to the principle anent subjection to Civil Government, held forth in our solemn Covenants which were sworn and subscribed by all ranks,—it is sufficient here to remember; That as the said Covenants were calculated allenarly for maintaining and promoting scriptural and receiv- ed
ed principles and reformation, both in Church and State: So it is both absurd and injurious to these Covenants,—to suppose that they overturned, in the least, any principles or duties relative to Civil Government; that were antecedently fixed by the word of God, and the law of nature. Yea, as our Confession of Faith, and particularly the fore-mentioned article, was drawn up and espoused in pursuance of and according unto these Covenants; it is therefore undeniable,—that no principle was or could be maintained in the said Covenants, but what is every way consistent with what the Presbytery is now affirming*.

It is now plain enough, that the principle which the Presbytery here affirms is agreeable to the principles of this Church, in her Confession and Covenants. Wherefore, the Anti-government scheme now on foot cannot find the least countenance from our Confession or Covenants; but the contrary: Nor can there be one instance given, of its corresponding unto the principles or conduct of any in this land,—before the Restoration of King Charles II.

ARGUMENT III. From her Principles in the late Period of Persecution.

But as little does this scheme any way agree unto, or find any countenance from the principles and conduct of our sufferers and martyrs; during the woful period betwixt the Restoration and Revolution. It is not required here,—to manifest the agreement betwixt the principles and conduct of these honourable witnesses, and those in the preceeding period. But for vindicating them against the injury which their testimony and memories suffer, by giving out that they were upon the Anti-government scheme

*These Covenants contain an engagement,—“to preserve and defend the King’s Majesty’s person and authority, in the preservation and defence of the true religion and liberties of the kingdoms:” Which obviously amounts to this,—That our Reformers did thereby swear, that as their main aim was to act in the preservation and defence of the true religion and liberties of the kingdoms; so they were resolved to preserve and defend the King’s person and authority, as far as the cause of his person and authority could consist with and be subordinate to that main aim.
Period II. of the present Civil Government.

scheme now maintained by some; it will suffice to remark that,

1. The powers whom they rejected did differ, not only as to their administration, but as to their office and kind,—from any we have now ado with. King Charles II, after his restoration,—revoked and rescinded the whole former deed of the body politic, investing him with Magistracy: As instead of holding his office immediately by the will of the body politic; he, by consent of Parliament, renounced any holding of them,—and (absurdly, against the very essential nature of magistracy) he arrogated a derivation of it from God immediately, Parl. 1. sess. 1. cap. 5. 15. According hereunto, beside all his other wickedness, he proceeded in the exercise of an habitual and horrid tyranny; which came to an unparalleled height, anno 1681: When, by act of Parliament, he reimposed a cess upon the whole kingdom, to support a military force; for suppressing the meetings of the Lord’s people, in the public profession of his name and covenanted cause,—under the odious notion of seditious and rebellious conventicles: Whereby the whole land was drawn into a conspiracy against the kingdom of Christ, and against their own rights and privileges as men. And as James VII did tread and proceed in his steps; so it soon appeared, at the Revolution, that their Government had really been a force upon the nation.

2. Our sufferers then were in a quite different situation from any in this period. Not only were they tyrannically imposed upon, to give express acknowledgment of the then authority; but they were actually cast out from under the wings of all Government, denied all benefit of law, and devoted unto destruction: So that they by no means proceeded ultroneously in their rejecting the Civil Government.

3. The state of their testimony, in rejecting the Civil Government, was entirely different from what some are now taking up. They owned that they neither did, nor could reject the Magistrate, merely for differing from them in religion: and the question with them here was,—“Whether a people long oppressed with the encroachments of tyrants and usurpers, may disown their pre-

“tended
“tended authority; and, when imposed upon to acknowledge it, may rather chuse to suffer than to own it.” Wherefore it is plain, that such a question as is now moved, about disowning the Civil Government, was never under their consideration; nor did they ever give any verdict relative thereunto.

Section III. Conclusion of the Whole.

Upon the whole, it is beyond all occasion of controversy,—that the principle now defended by this Presbytery, anent the authority of and subjection to the present Civil Government, is agreeable to the plain tenor of Scripture; and to the principles of all the reformed Churches, particularly of this Church in her Confession and Covenants.

Wherefore the Presbytery did, and hereby do assert and declare; That we ought to acknowledge the present Civil Authority over these nations, and subjection thereunto in lawful commands. And likewise they did, and hereby do condemn the opposite and dangerous extremes that some have gone into: According to their act passed at Edinburgh, February 3d 1743; the tenor whereof follows.

“The Presbytery are of opinion, that in regard they had formerly agreed, That it was not suitable to their present circumstances,—to blend civil and ecclesiastic matters in the oath of God, in renewing the Covenants; because that the cognizance of civil affairs belongs not properly to them as a Church Judicatory;—and some members being of the mind, that the reduplication of the Oath upon that clause of the Confession of Sins which was the occasion of the dissent, would, upon the matter, amount to the foresaid blending; that therefore the said clause shall be left out. Yet, that none may misconstruct the principles of the Presbytery on the head of the Civil Magistrate; although the national apostasy under which the Lord’s remnant through the land have been groaning, while our rulers have not only neglected but contradicted their duty of espousing

“and

*Hind let loose, p. 275. Informatory Vindication, printed Anno 1707, p. 37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 43, 65, 66. Mr Renwick’s last speech and testimony, adhering to the Informatory Vindication.
“and supporting the covenanted principles and reformation of this Church, whereby they have greatly provoked the Lord to anger,—be ground of humiliation before the Lord: Yet the Presbytery do hereby condemn the dangerous extreme that some have gone into, of impugning the present Civil Authority over these nations and subjection thereunto in lawful commands, on account of the want of these qualifications which Magistrates ought to have by the word of God and our Covenants,—even though they allow us in the free exercise of our religion, and are not manifestly unhinging the liberties of the kingdom; an opinion and practice contrary to the plain tenor of scripture, and to the known principles of this Church in her Confession and Covenants,—and of all other reformed Churches: And that some few others carry their zeal against the defections and evils of the times, to the dangerous extreme of espousing principles in favour of propagating religion by offensive arms; quite contrary to that disposition which ought to be in all the professed followers of Christ, who came not to destroy mens lives but to save them. And likewise the Presbytery agree, That unless the Reverend Mr Nairn retract the principles contained in the said Dissent, that tend to overthrow Civil Magistracy; they will proceed against him according to the rules of this Church.”

Finally, the Presbytery do hereby beseech and obtest all under their inspection, to watch against the snares of this time: Particularly, in setting the duty of testifying against the apostasy and corruption of our rulers and body politic, in opposition to the duty of yielding subjection and obedience to the present Civil Authority over these nations, in lawful commands. It is the special duty of all and every one, to be deeply humbled before the Lord for our grievous apostasy and corruption; not only in Church, but in State: And to wrestle with the God of Jacob, upon the footing of his gracious promise, Isa. iv. 2, 3, 4, 5. *In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely, for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come*
come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy; even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof; by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her Assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day; and the shining of a flaming fire by night: For upon all the glory shall be a defence.

And agreeably unto this, it is the duty of the Lord’s people to adhere unto the standard of a public testimony against corruptions and defections, civil and ecclesiastical; and to observe the divine order in working reformation: So as every one may, through the grace of our Lord Jesus, study personal and family reformation; and at the same time may seek after reformation of the Church, according to the word of God and our Covenants,—as introductory unto reformation in the state; which likewises will natively introduce reformation in places of public power and judgment. Moreover, it is the special duty of all the Lord’s people,—to study that their testimony be in meekness and fear, becoming the gospel: And to watch against the dangerous extreme of managing a testimony with bitterness of spirit and speech, particularly against Civil Superiors; whereas Angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord, 2 Pet. i. 11. Nor, in the present case, can any testimony be managed that the Lord will accept of as true and faithful; without cleaving to the doctrine of his word,—as it unfolds the duty of submitting to every ordinance of man in so clear and obvious a light, as leaves no room for any, that look with singleness and fear, to ly in darkness or perplexity thereanent: and without continuing accordingly to walk in the plain footsteps of the Church of Christ in all ages:—That so, when the Lord shall return to these lands, we may be capable of meeting him with the Church’s Confession, Isa, xxvi. 8. In the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee.

Extracted——

JOHN POTTS, Pr. Clr.

APPENDIX
APPENDIX I.

CONCERNING the Renovation of our SOLEMN COVENANTS.

PART I.

The Warrants for Solemn Covenanting, under the New Testament*.

It is the case with this, as with every other duty,—That the greatest bar in the way of it, which will be most difficult to get removed, lies in disaffection from it. A disaffected heart will easily find plausible objections; which persons will reckon of sufficient force, just because they would have them to be so: While the strongest arguments for a rational conviction of the duty, will not get any fair hearing. But when this corrupt bias of the heart is rectified, which the Lord only can do; then all the objections which were formerly taken for substance, will appear to be no more than shadows. **Great peace have they which love thy law**, says the Psalmist; who have their hearts reconciled to every duty in the season of it: *Nothing shall offend them*; they will find no difficulty in offences or stumbling-blocks which will make others to fall, or turn out of the way. And amidst all the cavils of adversaries, who must be accountable to God for their disaffection; the warrantableness and duty of solemn covenanting, of public vowing or swearing to the Lord,—will continue plain and indisputable, to those whose hearts are properly inclined to God’s testimonies: As it may be suf-

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*This part is taken from a Sermon which was preached by the Writer of the present Display (from Neh. ix. 38.), June 10th 1757; and published some years ago, along with several Sermons by one of his brethren on the same subject.*
ficiently argued from five general topics, viz. From scripture-precepts, scripture-examples, scripture-prophecies, scripture-promises; and the natural principles of religion. And,

I. The warrantableness and duty of public vowing or swearing to the Lord—may be argued from express scripture-precepts, as (in Deut. x. 20'), Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name: (Psal. lxxvi. 11.): Vow and pay, unto the Lord your God; (Jer. iv. 2.), And thou shalt swear, The LORD liveth; in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness.—Here it is evident, (if we would not explain away the meaning of the Lord’s word, and leave it of an uncertain sound); that there is a vowing and swearing, even a formal vowing and swearing, which belongs to the duty of Church-members. And it is not merely or immediately meant of such swearing as takes place among men, for confirmation,—as an end of all strife, about their secular and relative concerns: But it is plainly meant of a swearing, the matter as well as the nature of which is religious. It is a swearing, as to the matter of it, that the LORD liveth; and this implies an acknowledging and avouching of all the properties, prerogatives, interests, and cause of the living God,—which he can no more part with, than with his life or being. Thus it is a vowing to the LORD; a coming under solemn and explicit engagements to the Lord, for the performance of the duties incumbent upon us. And the swearing by his name, which is enjoined in the first of the texts cited,—must, according to the connexion of the words, be a swearing to what is there required; to fear the Lord, to serve him, and to cleave unto him. Neither is the vowing and swearing required in these texts, confined to any private personal transaction: The precepts are general, to a professing people; so that the more solemn and public this work be, in a joint manner,—the more fully must it come up to the import of these precepts. And when the Lord has given us such precepts in his word, shall we think that we are left at freedom to disregard them,—or that we are not thereby warranted and called to set about a public vowing and swearing to the Lord; when, in providence, we have particular occasion and causes for doing so?

II. The
II. The warrantableness and duty of public vowing or swearing to the Lord—may be argued from scripture-examples. It cannot be refused, that there were various examples of this work under the Old Testament; and the only question here must be,—Whether these examples be imitable by us under the New Testament dispensation, or set forth for our imitating them upon particular occasions? And for clearing this, we may briefly observe a few things. As,

1. That the examples of covenating-work under the Old Testament are for our imitation, appears from the matter thereof. What they solemnly engaged unto on these occasions, was not merely the performance of things ceremonial and typical,—or judaical; but also, and more especially, things moral; of perpetual obligation. In the Solemn Covenant of Nehemiah’s time,—they engaged to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes; according to the 29th verse of the 10th chapter. In that of Josiah’s time,—they engaged to walk after the LORD; and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies and his statutes, (2 Chron. xxxiv. 31.). In that of Jehoiada’s time,—they engaged that they should be the LORD’S people, 2 Chron. xxii. 16: And in Asa’s time,—they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers, with all their heart and with all their soul, (2 Chron. xv. 12.).—Now, it is as competent for us as for them, as incumbent on us as on them,—to walk after the Lord; to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our God, and his testimonies and his statutes; to be the Lord’s people; and to seek the Lord God of our fathers, with all our heart and with all our soul. But if it be still competent for and incumbent upon us, to be and do so; it must be strange to suppose, as if it were not equally competent for and incumbent upon us, to come under solemn engagements for that purpose,—when particular and special occasions for doing so come in our way. Again,

2. That the examples of covenating-work under the Old Testament are for our imitation, appears from the occasions thereof.—Upon what occasions did the Jewish people set about that solemn work? Was it in any periodical turns,
The Warrants for Covenanting.

Appendix I.

turns, or at any stated course of times,—like those solemnities which were peculiar to them as a Jewish Church? By no means. But without any judaical institution, any special ordinance for it in the law of Moses,—they set about this work occasionally; upon the back of great corruptions and backslidings, when they had been visited by divine judgments on account of these,—and when they were awakened to set about reformation, in returning to the Lord. Thus, it was a work which they set about, not peculiarly as a Jewish Church,—but in general as a Church, a professing people: So that, in this, they were for an example to us. And,

3. That the examples of covenanting-work under the Old Testament are for our imitation, appears from the circumstances thereof.—Here we shall only observe the circumstances of that covenanting which took place in Nehemiah’s time. And it is observable, that this work was not gone about in such a way as belonged to the Mosaical and judaical ordinances; as to which, the Priests and Levites stood in a distinct capacity. For though some Levites officiated in the public confession, as the mouth of the people; and though a number of Priests and Levites led an example in the matter: Yet the making of the Covenant, or the entering into the oath, was equally by the body of the people; their wives, their sons, and their daughters,—even every one having knowledge, and having understanding; as in the 28th verse of the 10th chapter. Again, the day upon which this solemn work was gone about—was not a day set apart for any solemn worship in the law of Moses; it was not a day of any solemnity to them peculiarly as a Jewish Church, but a day which they themselves set apart for that purpose. We find, in the latter part of the 8th chapter, that they had been keeping the feast of Tabernacles; which began on the 15th day of the 7th month: And they kept it seven days, ending on the 21st of that month; and on the 8th day, being the 22d of that month, there was a solemn assembly according to the manner. But on the 2d day afterwards, being the 24th day of the month, as in the beginning of the 9th chapter,—they observed a solemn fast, without any particular institution for it: In the close of which they solemnly renewed cove-

nanting-work.
nanting-work. It is then evident, from the circumstances of the work,—that they did not go about it as peculiarly a Jewish Church; but in general as a Church, a professing people: So that, in this, they were for an example to us. Yea farther,

4. That the examples of covenanting-work under the Old Testament are for our imitation, appears from an actual imitating of them under the New Testament.—We need not think it any way strange, that little is to be found to this purpose in the history of the New Testament. Many things are not there recorded—of what even our Lord said and did, though no doubt in themselves very material. And we need as little doubt, that many things approved and imitable in the time of the Apostles—are not recorded; where the rule of practice as to the matter was already plain enough in Scripture.—But we have an example of solemn covenanting in the New Testament; which cannot be explained away from that meaning, without explaining it to nothing. The Apostle says, concerning the Churches of Macedonia [2 Cor. viii. 5.], And this they did, not as we hoped; but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. This giving of their own selves to the Lord—cannot be understood, merely in general, of their making and maintaining a profession of Christianity; and keeping up a regular dispensation of the word and sacraments: For this had been nothing at all peculiar for the Apostle to take notice of about them, more than about other Churches. Besides, what they did in this matter was beyond the Apostle’s expectation; not as we hoped, says he: But could it be more than the Apostle expected, that they were professing Christianity,—and keeping up regular Assemblies, for the dispensation of word and sacrament? Certainly all this was what the Apostle expected, and took for granted. But there was something more here, in giving their own selves to the Lord: For, as a well known Commentator expresses it,—“They solemnly, jointly and unanimously made a fresh surrender of themselves, and all they had, unto the Lord Jesus Christ.” What particular formality they observed in doing this, whether only by words or also by writing,—is not material here: For it is enough to the

present
present argument, that this was a solemn and extraordinary devoting of themselves to the Lord; beyond what the Apostle had been expecting. It was thus a solemn covenanting-work, whatever was the particular manner of it: And a work about which they did not wait for any apostolical injunction or direction, for any signification of Paul’s will to them; yet he acknowledges that it was by the will of God,—in conformity to Scripture-examples which they had before them. We need not be surprised, at finding no more instances of this sort recorded in the New Testament; the history of which reaches down but about thirty years from the beginning of the Christian Church: While our rule, in this case, is supposed to be plain enough in the Old Testament scripture, as it was to these Macedonians. Neither may we slight this single instance of covenanting-work in the New Testament,—while one hint in the records of the Holy Ghost must be of the greatest weight: And it is from such a general or occasional record of Scripture-example, that we gather the institution of the Christian Sabbath*. Moreover,

5. That the examples of covenanting under the Old Testament are for our imitation, appears from the special unity of the Old and New Testament Church. These are not properly two different Churches as to their nature, but all one Church; brought through infancy and non-age to a state of maturity, under a more full and clear dispensation of grace.—According to the ancient prophecy and promise, Japheth (the posterity of Japheth in the Gentile European nations, the isles of the Gentiles) is brought to dwell in the tents of Shem; of the Jewish Church, who descended from Shem: The Gentiles are brought to dwell in the same tents, in the same Church-state, with the same privileges,—

*That public covenanting was used by the primitive Christians, seems evident from a Letter concerning them by Pliny (one of the Roman Governors) to the Emperor Trajan; written soon after, if not before the death of the Apostle John. Therein he represented,—“That they were an harmless and inoffensive sort of people; who only worshipped Christ as God, and bound themselves by oath to abstain from all wickedness.” This evidently meant a joint swearing or vowing: And if they bound themselves in this solemn manner, to abstain from all wickedness; it must certainly be understood, that they at the same time, in the same manner, bound themselves—to the performance of all duties.
privileges,—under a new and more glorious administration. Seeing therefore the Jewish and Christian Churches, though they be two as to their form, are but one Church as to their nature; it plainly follows,—that approved examples under the Old Testament, as to those things which are of a moral nature, cannot be antiquated under the New Testament.—And all this further appears, from the view which is given of the Christian Church in the 7th chapter of the Revelation. There, we have an account of sealing-work among the tribes of Israel; twelve thousand sealed of each tribe, making in all one hundred and forty-four thousand. And it is not the Jewish Church, in the tribes of Israel after the flesh, which is there set forth: But it is a metaphorical view given of the Christian Church, in the days of Antichrist’s rise and prevalence; the same hundred and forty-four thousand who are represented as standing with the Lamb upon the Mount Zion, at the dawning of the Reformation from Popery,—according to the 14th chapter of that book, at the beginning. And must not the Old Testament examples of solemn engagements to the Lord, be for our imitation still; when the Christian Church is thus represented, as possessing the room and character of these ancient tribes of Israel? Certainly our obligation, in this matter, cannot be inferior to theirs; nor are we intitled to less solemnity, in professing what obligation we are under to the Lord God of Israel.

But against this whole argument from Old Testament examples, there is an objection made by some,—from what we have in the 8th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. There we have an account of a first and a new Covenant which God made with Israel; a new Covenant under the Gospel, by which the first was superseded,—decayed, waxed old, and vanished away: And some would have this old Covenant to be understood of that covenant of duties which Israel came under, and several times renewed. But it is plain, that by the first and old Covenant there,—we are to understand the peculiar administration of the Covenant of Grace which the Jewish Church was under; in the way of types and ceremonies, and through a peculiar Covenant that God made with them about their possession of Canaan. For how erroneous, how absurd must it be, to suppose
that their Covenant of Duties was antiquated by the gospel,—not to remain imitable in the Christian Church? It is even the same thing as to suppose,—that the gospel antiquates or supersedes an obligation to be the Lord’s people, to walk after the Lord; leaving no room, at least, for any solemn profession of such a thing. It can be no less than a blaspheming of the gospel, to put such a construction upon it.—But we now proceed to observe, that,

III. The warrantableness and duty of public vowing or swearing to the Lord—may be argued from Scripture-prophecies.—It is a prophecy respecting gospel times, that we have (in Isa. xix. 21.); And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day;—they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it. A Christian Church was soon planted in Egypt, when the gospel came to spread among the Gentiles: And besides in the language of the Old Testament,—Egypt is a name given to the Gentiles in general; who are thus denominated from those Egyptian Gentiles that were most directly opposed to God’s Israel of old,—and respecting whom he said, I will call them my people which were not my people. Now, it is prophesied concerning them,—They shall vow a vow unto the Lord; or, as it is expressed in the 18th verse of that chapter, They shall swear to the Lord of Hosts.—To the same purpose is that prophecy (in Isa. xlv. 4.) One shall say, I am the Lord’s; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel. That text is not to be understood of different persons acting differently,—but all of one and the same party: For, according to the original, it may properly run,—One shall say; and he shall call himself; and he shall subscribe. Now, what warrant can we have to explain away these prophecies of vowing, swearing, and subscribing,—to explain them away from the native and literal meaning of the words? That meaning which it behoved them to bear, according to the known examples of the Old Testament Church which they refer to.—It is a similar prophecy that we have (in Zech. xiii. 9.); They shall say, The Lord is my God. For this saying must extend unto all that formality and solemnity of saying it—which was
was well known in the practice of the Old Testament Church; concerning whom it was declared, upon an occasion of solemn covenanting among them,—*Thou hast avouched the Lord to be thy God*, [Deut. xxvi. 17.]. And this same is set forth as an event of gospel times, [Rev. xi. 15.]; *The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ*: For this must extend unto all that solemnity of a people’s devoting themselves to the Lord, which was well known in the practice of the Old Testament Church; while the duty of solemn professions cannot be weakened or abated under the gospel.—And accordingly, the glorious Reformation from Popery was carried on in the way of solemn covenant-engagements to the Lord. It was so in foreign Churches: And it was so, both in Scotland and England; even before the time of what is now called the National Covenant, and the Solemn League and Covenant. This was a mean which the Lord then eminently blessed; a practice which he eminently countenanced from heaven, and which has been witnessed unto by the blood of Martyrs. Nor will it be found a light matter, at this time of day, to contradict or disparage the same. The Lord will have it effectually vindicated, in his own time. But,

IV. The warrantableness and duty of public vowing or swearing to the Lord—may be argued from *Scripture-promises*. The afore-mentioned prophecies are also promises, being prophecies of good things. But what we mean here,—are promises which do not point out a special event of the matter in hand; being only general encouragements to such work in the season of it. Such promissory encouragements we have, [Matth. x. 32.]; *Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven*: [Heb. x. 23.]; *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised*: And [Rev. iii. 10.]; *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation*. Now, as these are sweet encouragements to our Christian profession and confession, in all the steps and degrees of it; so there can be no warrant to bear them down from an application to the most open and solemn confessing of Christ; the most open and solemn
keeping of the word of his patience, his cause,—in bearing the most explicit testimony of our adherence to the same. There are no lengths which the Church went of old,—in solemn devotings of themselves to the Lord, avouchings of him to be their God, and engagements to be for him; no such lengths but what we are still encouraged to go, in surnaming ourselves by the name of Israel. And we may observe that,

V. The warrantableness and duty of public vowing or swearing to the Lord—may be argued from the natural principles of religion. It is plain, even from natural religion,—That as we are wholly from God, so we ought to be wholly for him; and that our subjection to God, in espousing the interests of his kingdom and glory, ought to be professed: As also, That our profession of this, in our several capacities, cannot be too public and explicit. What we ought to profess of the Lord’s cause and truth, and of our allegiance to him,—we ought to profess the same in the most open and formal manner, according to the occasions which we have for doing so. It is most absurd, and very inconsistent even with natural religion,—to suppose that our professed subjection to the gospel, or the profession of our allegiance to Zion’s King upon fit occasions, can be gone about with too much form and solemnity: Or that there can be any excess of our profession, in public swearing unto him; when yet there is no excess, in such a manner of professing allegiance to an earthly Sovereign. And while the subjects of earthly Kings do reckon it suitable and seasonable, in times of open rebellion,—to approach their Sovereign with solemn addresses and oaths of allegiance: Shall it not be competent for, and incumbent upon the subjects of Zion’s King, in times of open rebellion against his government; to give the most open testimony of their adherence to him and his interests, by public vowing and swearing to the Lord,—renouncing all opposite interests, covenanting to be the Lord’s people, and engaging to walk after the Lord*? The warrantableness and

* A striking proof of the natural Warrant for Covenanting, is to be found in some passages of the Heathen Philosopher Epictetus,—who liv-
and duty of such procedure—is plainly founded on the obligation which we are under, both from natural and revealed religion, to be for the Lord and not for another; to state ourselves on the Lord’s side, in a day of great apostasy from him. And, as we have observed, it is grossly absurd to suppose,—that a stating of ourselves on the Lord’s side can be with too much form and solemnity; especially when it is gone about in a conformity with examples, which the Holy Spirit is continually laying before us in Scripture.

Upon the whole,—the warrantableness and duty of solemn covenanting cannot be controverted; but from a spirit of disaffection to the peculiar interests of religion, or of lukewarmness concerning the same.

PART II.

A Defence of Solemn Covenanting, in opposition to the Preface of a late Survey.

A Pamphlet was published, about three years ago,—entitled, [“An impartial Survey of the controversy so long agitated in the Secession, relative to the religious clause of some Burgess-oaths”]: With a Preface,—wherein (according to the title-page) “The nature and seasons of public covenanting are explained upon Scripture-principles; in order to satisfy the scrupulous, about the expediency of renewing our solemn Covenants at present.”

One would imagine, from these words, that the Preface had been designed for solving and removing scruples; thus:

“Thou art his workmanship; he hath not only made thee, but hath bestowed all his benefits upon thee.” Lib. ii. Cap. 8.

“To this God ye ought to swear, as the soldiers do to Caesar. But they indeed, for the sake of wages, do swear, that they will above all things study the welfare of Caesar; and while you are loaded with so many and so great benefits by God, will ye not swear to him? Or, when ye have sworn, will ye not perform? And what should ye swear? That ye will always obey his voice, that ye will never complain of him, that ye will never find fault with any thing he measures out unto you; that ye will always willingly do and suffer whatever he shall think necessary to put upon you.” Lib. i. Cap. 14.
thus to satisfy persons about the present expediency of the
renovation mentioned, in order to their setting about it without
delay. But, under this false face, the real design and endeavour
is,—not only to promote and confirm scruples, for exploding
every supposition of such expediency; but also to defame and
abolish that solemn work altogether: Tending to corrupt the
mind and stupefy the conscience of his scrupulous reader, about
the whole affair.

This attack is also distinguished from all others that have
yet been made, upon the Associate Presbytery’s method and
appointment of covenanting-work,—by another and more
notable mark of *treacherous disingenuity*; like the part which
Joab acted [2 Sam. iii. 27.], under a mask of friendship. For, it
is not made by one who had never acknowledged, or had fairly
renounced the state of the Secession-Testimony: But by one
who still pretends, as if he and his party (in the Synod of the
separating brethren) were the only true successors of the
Associate Presbytery in their Constitution and Testimony; that
they “have uniformly kept on their first ground,”—as to “the
rise and grounds, and original measures of the Secession,”—and
have “dropt no part of the Testimony they had espoused*.”

The Prefacer manages all his malignant opposition to
covenanting-work, by way of answer to what he (ironically)
calls *that hard question;* which he says “The Burghers” (he and
his party) “are often asked,—Why they do not renew the
Covenants, if they maintain nothing but covenanted principles?”
p. 4. 15. But there is a palpable deceit, in representing such a
question as having been ever put to any of them. It should have
been honestly represented,—as a question about why they do
not proceed in covenanting-work, according to the Act of the
Associate Presbytery for that purpose; if, as they pretend,—they
have still kept the first ground of the Secession Cause and
Testimony, as it was among the hands of that Presbytery.
However, his way of stating the question saved him a deal of
trouble in answering it.

It would be business too low for this place,—to chastise
the arrogance, impertinencies and improprieties in the
Prefacer’s manner of writing; with the malicious con-

*Survey, p. 40, 71.*
structions and suppositions, as also the virulent calumnies about loose procedure in covenanting-work,—which are cast upon the Associate Synod, in that preface: But he, and his correspondent whose invective he adopts,—are left to the free enjoyment of whatever satisfaction they can find, in such measures of scurrility and slander. It may be sufficient here to expose his erroneous doctrine,—about *solemn covenanting*, about *renewing* Solemn Covenants, and about the Associate Presbytery’s *manner* of renewing our Covenants: A doing of which in a soft or apologetical manner, is what he has forfeited all title unto,—by the abominable spirit of his *Preface* and *Survey*.

Section I. Of Solemn Covenanting.

I. When the Prefacer has told, what none ever disputed, that “covenanting is but an occasional duty,”—he allows that, in three cases, “a public Covenant or Vow *may be made*” (putting these words into a distinguished character as here) “unto the Lord;” and tells that “these are the only cases wherein the Church is *authorised*, by scripture-example or command, to make a Covenant.” p. 5. Thus, though he gives some room to the words *duty* and *command*, he gives none to their sense,—with regard to covenanting; but really turns it off the footing of *duty* or *obligation* in any case, to rest only upon the footing of mere warrant,—as what *may be* or is *authorised*: A short method indeed, for setting the consciences of his scrupulous persons quite at ease,—in the neglect of that solemn work.

II. The *three cases*, which he dictates to be the *only cases* wherein this work may take place, are these, *viz.* “when the Church is brought into a situation which contains a providential call to some important duties, *connected only with her present condition*; or when she is in providence brought into a situation, whereby her members are in great danger of falling from their stedfastness; or when a general reformation is to be accomplished,”—that is, as he explains it, “a present reformation among the covenanters;” and he pronounces, that “to make a Covenant with the Lord in any other circumstances, “and
“and for any other purposes,—is equally contrary to Scripture and common sense.” p. 5.

The first of these cases, according to any proper sense of the words, is indeed very singular,—even not supposable, as what ever did or can exist; that the Church should have “a providential call to some important duties connected only with her present condition.” Or, as he further expresses it,—“duties presently incumbent on the Covenanters, in virtue of their present and peculiar situation in providence.”—An enforcing of the call to certain duties, and an affording of some new or peculiar occasion for the performance of certain duties; these are things that may well enough be ascribed to providential circumstances. But that any duty can be founded upon such circumstances,—as being incumbent in virtue of them, and connected only with them; or as duties which had no foundation before these circumstances, nor will have any after them: All this is certainly a very gross imagination; which yet may serve to explode covenanting-work, so far as depends on that first case,—while people can never apprehend any such duties as it proceeds upon.

And it is observable, as to all the three cases, when determined to be the only cases; that the door is thereby absolutely shut against public covenanting,—so far as it may be for the purpose of solemn homage and allegiance by the Covenanters to Zion’s King, in opposition to the course of a rebellious people among whom they live: Though it was certainly one purpose of all covenanting-work in the Jewish Church, to have the name and cause of Israel’s God held fast; not only unto a bearing down of corruptions among themselves, but also as a proper witnessing against the idolatry of the nations around them; according to their character and duty, as a people redeemed from the nations and their gods,—of whom the Lord said, Ye are my witnesses that I am God.

Thus the Prefacer endeavours, by his above doctrine of cases, of only cases,—to abolish all notion among people, of setting about that solemn work in the character of witnesses for Christ; or of their ever being either called or warranted to make an appearance on the Lord’s side, and to be valiant for the truth upon the earth,—in the way of so-

lemn
lemn covenanting. And while his foresaid specification of cases is brought in as one reason, why his party do not renew the Covenants; if it be any way to the purpose, it must imply,—that none of these three cases do presently exist among them!

III. He tells, that “scriptural covenanting was always managed upon principles which fully satisfied all that feared God,—universally edifying to the saints;” And that it “was never reckoned either necessary or seasonable, except in extraordinary circumstances; and these extraordinary circumstances were evident to all concerned,—universally allowed to be extraordinary,—generally acknowledged to be a sufficient call, to make a Covenant concerning them.” p. 6, 7, 16.

The Prefacer is here obliged to allow of some extraordinary course to be taken, in extraordinary circumstances; notwithstanding his stupid ridicule afterwards, in another case, of any such thing.—But covenanting-work is here put upon such a footing, as must supercede or exclude it altogether; so long as any controversy about it may take place, among any whom an arbitrary charity may please to consider as fearers of God or saints. Accordingly, the Prefacer gives it for one reason why his party do not renew the Covenants,—“that the Burghers cannot at present covenant with unanimity among their connections, nor to the general edification of such as fear God.” p. 14. And thus, covenanting-work must have no place in an earnest contending for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints; it must have no place,—if any who may be reckoned saints, however far backsliding saints, shall please to object. Fine doctrine indeed, for gulling the consciences of professors! Proper doctrine, for obtaining the answer which he wants to his question; “Have we, in” (present) “circumstances, any scripture-warrant for covenanting?” p. 19. And thus also, all the cases in which he had allowed that covenanting may be,—must go for nothing; because it is not supposable that any of them can ever be altogether uncontroverted, among all supposed fearers of God or saints.

IV. The Prefacer determines, that “covenanting should always be managed with a view to the time to
"come: Mercies that have been received, and transgressions of the law of God in time past, may and should be considered as motives to this duty; but the duty itself carries the mind only forward to future conduct." p. 5, 6. And this pedantic observation might be taken, at first view,—as supposing all his readers to be arrant fools: For who but such could ever imagine, that any might pretend a present covenanting or engaging to do something in the time past; while not a moment of that time can ever be recalled, for a new doing of any thing in it? Do people need to be taught,—that they should not engage to-day, that they will do something yesterday?

But there is a snake in the grass here; which creeps out a little afterwards, upon the head of Renewing Covenants.—The base intendment of the observation is this; that whatever influence of former things the mind may be under, considered as motives: Yet the deed of covenanting itself must have no respect of any former attainments or engagements, as recognising the same; nor to any former evils whatsoever,—by way of testifying and engaging against them.

V. The Prefacer informs us,—that "The design of Scriptural covenanting was, to acknowledge God as the Lord of the faith, obedience and resigned submission of the Covenanters; and to promote in their own souls a deep impression of his truths, a detestation of their own sinful courses, and an humble walking with God in the mindst of the dangers they were beset with:—The matter of their Covenant was only a reformation from their own sins, and the future practice of their own duty;—the nature of their Covenant was a solemn engagement to reform their own present sins, and to perform their duty in time to come;—they made their Covenant concerning the reformation of their own sins." And all this he sets in opposition to "a bearing witness against others," which he condemns, p. 7, 10, 11, 16.

In the above words the Prefacer once and again blunders upon a very hard task for his Covenanters, even beyond the reach of omnipotence; which, though it can make an end of sins, cannot reform them.—But what is the
the genuine amount of all this misty doctrine, as to the case in hand? It is even this;—That any number of people, in their solemn and public covenanting, must have no regard but to their own intrinsic concerns; they are to keep as much within themselves, as any independent congregation in their ordinary and private Church-covenant: When their covenanting is in a state of Secession from the corrupt body of a Presbyterian National Church;—it must be without any regard to the corruptions of that Body, it must bear no testimony against the same: And the acknowledgment of God, as a Lord with respect to the Covenanters and their interests,—must abstract from any regarding of him as a Lord with respect to any other beings or interests in the world!—There is need to pray for the Lord’s pitying a people, who can submit to such a direction of their consciences.

What has been said may serve, with regard to the Prefacer’s general doctrines about solemn covenanting. The gross insult committed upon the Scriptures of the Old Testament, by his pretending to find any foundation in them for such doctrines, deserves no particular notice.

Section II. Of renewing Solemn Covenants.

Upon this head, the Prefacer assumes a most formidable appearance; while he comes forth brandishing a new piece of armour against the truth, such as was never before heard of in the Christian world. It is wholly of his own invention: And so confident is he in it as armour of proof, sufficient for making a full end of renewing Covenants,—that he brings it to the field with a bold defiance, like a Goliath in the cause of his party; “I challenge” (says he, p. 8.) “any person to produce so much as one instance from the Bible, of either Jews or Christians renewing a former Covenant by any future oath.”—Yet, after all, there is no real hazard to the truth from the shaking of this spear.

The new doctrine referred to, is of the following amount, viz. “The plan of scriptural covenanting in
“the Church, both under the Jewish and Christian dispensation, should always lead directly to the Word of God itself:—It is always described as a transaction entirely new: It is never once called the renewing of a former Covenant; but is constantly said to be a making or entering into a Covenant, without any recognition on any former Covenant: No; covenanting upon the Scripture plan recognised, homologated or approved only the book of God’s Covenant; but not the Covenants made, or entered into by men;—there is not the remotest hint that they renewed, or repeated their adherence to the deed of their fathers;—nor did they ever directly or indirectly intimate, that they referred to any former Covenant their fathers had made; when they covenanted for themselves on any occasion whatever.” (p. 7, 8, 9, 17.). Now,

I. A bold stroke is here given to Covenanting-work, in the repeated instances of it under the Old Testament. The plain meaning is,—that, in every new transaction thereof, no acknowledgment or account was made of any such transaction which had formerly taken place; that there was no homologating or approving of any Solemn Covenant which Israel had formerly made, no adherence thereto,—yea no reference to any such deed, as having ever taken place before.

II. The whole foundation of such new doctrine, is this; that, in every repeated instance of Covenanting among the Israelites, “it is constantly said to be a making or entering into a Covenant, without any recognition on a former Covenant,—never once, called the renewing of a former Covenant;” And, for proof of this, the Prefacer quotes the expressions of making and entering used on each new occasion of that work; adding,—“I have particularly cited the very expressions used about Scripture-covenanting, that it may appear in what light the Holy Ghost has represented every such transaction.” (p. 7.). But,

1. His quotations are very partial and unfair; fitted for serving his own purpose, not the purpose of truth. He conceals a most material circumstance; that in eight of the nine instances of covenanting which he refers to,—the glorious
glorious Object is acknowledged or represented in terms which necessarily import a reference unto and recognising of former covenanting*. He is still acknowledged or represented as The God, the Lord God of Israel; the God, the Lord God of their fathers; our God, the Lord our God. In the other instance [2 Chron. xxiii. 16.], it was a Covenant that they should be the Lord’s people; which could not mean a becoming so for the first time, but a keeping up of that distinguished character which belonged to Israel. And the LORD’S character as their God, with their character as his people,—always necessarily referred unto and recognised former Covenant-transactions between God and them, as the formal ground of these characters; according to the mutual avouching which therein took place between God and them, Deut. xxvi. 17, 18.

2. He tells us, of the repeated covenanting which then took place,—that “it is never once called the renewing of a former Covenant.” But what a sandy foundation is this, for supporting his new scheme? The question is not, about how it was called,—but about what it was; not about words, but about the matter of the thing,—not about the arbitrary stile of language, but about the necessary import of the deed. The Scripture briefly represents matters of fact, in the case,—without recording all the circumstances of manner or form. If it was the renewing of a former Covenant, we may well enough call it so; as our translators have not scrupled to do, in the contents of some chapters: While they say [Josh. xxiv.], Joshua reneweth a covenant between them and God; and [2 Chron. xxxiv.], Josiah reneweth the covenant with God. But,

3. What are we to understand, by the renewing of a Covenant? Nothing more can be the real import of the thing, than this; that, without moving any objection against the ancient form of a Covenant in its season, and while acknowledging breaches of God’s law as likeways breaches of that Covenant,—there be a solemn avouching, not only of the primary obligation which the law of God lays upon us, but of a secondary obligation

laid

laid on us also by that former Covenant. Whatever variations there may be in the manner of doing this,—whatever differences as to its being done more expressly or implicitly; nothing further can belong to the nature of the deed*. Well,

4. When the people of Israel set about covenanting-work, on any new occasion,—was there no renewing of any former Covenant which Israel had made; according to the proper sense of the thing, above-expressed? Was there no reference to any such former Covenant; in considering themselves as chargeable with breaches of it, and considering it as a superadded obligation to duties?—If such had been the nature of their covenanting, as the Prefacer teaches, it must have been of an impious nature; as bearing no conformity to the tenor of the Lord’s reproofs, nor of their own solemn confessions,—relative to such work.

Every Covenant which they made, God acknowledged to be his Covenant; as he said [Jer. xxxiv. 18., my Covenant (that is) the Covenant which they had made before me. And what was the tenor of his reproofs, relative to such work? It was this, viz. This people hath transgressed my Covenant, which I commanded their fathers;—they rejected his Covenant that he made with their fathers;—they have forsaken the Covenant of the Lord their God;—they have broken my Covenant;—they, like men, have transgressed the Covenant;—they have transgressed my Covenant†.

And what was the tenor of their confessions, relative to such work; when confessing their own sins, and the sins of their fathers? It was this, viz. They sinned against thy judgments,—and withdrew the shoulder, (plainly referring to former engagements);—they kept not the Covenant of God,—they turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers;—we have rebelled, (plainly referring to former allegiance); Why do we deal treacherously, by profaning the Covenant of our fathers‡?

Such

*See Page 268.


Such was the respect which the Lord always had, and which Israel in their good times always had,—to their former covenantings; utterly inconsistent with the new doctrine so boldly palmed upon us by the Prefacer. The Lord taught them, at a dreadful expence, that they should always maintain a special respect to the Covenants of their fathers,—though hundreds of years backward; by an example in the case of even a civil Covenant with the Gibeonites*: How much more, in the case of religious Covenants?

Yea, they were taught to consider what had been said of old time, in a way of covenanting,—as said by themselves, in the loins of their fathers; of old time,—thou saidest I will not transgress†: Which required a particular respect and adherence thereto, a particular sense of obligation thereby,—in their new covenantings. And however far they forgot or lost a sense of it, in their times of corruption; are we to suppose that, in their covenanting times, they were utterly regardless of all this: That there was then no recognition, no homologation, no adherence, no reference,—as to any former covenanting? The base supposition is plainly refuted, by the Covenant-characters under which they always considered both the Lord and themselves, on these solemn occasions; as above represented.

5. The Prefacer has the assurance (p. 9.) to give out,—that the Church of Scotland, in former periods of covenanting, was against renewing or repeating an adherence to the like deed of their fathers: And he offers to prove this, by a mangled quotation from the Associate Presbytery’s Answers to Mr Nairn, (setting forth a deal of it in capital letters, as if it were a glaring proof of his point); thereby palming that vile doctrine on them also. But there have certainly been few instances of such effrontery in any writer; as if the chance of getting some readers imposed upon, might harden against all shame about the manner of doing it. For, as he could not but know,—the Associate Presbytery is there expressly pleading for the renovation of former Covenants; expressly pleading,—that the manner of covenanting agreed upon by them, is a real re-

*2 Sam. xxi. 1, 2. †Jer. ii. 20.
newing of our solemn Covenants; and expressly pleading,—that
the covenanting in our last period of reformation, was a real and
professed renewing of the National Covenant which had been
sworn in the period preceding*. Only, they are there
pleading,—that this renovation does not require a repetition of
the same form and words wherein Covenants were formerly
conceived.—And so, another passage in these Answers,
which the Prefacer (p. 14.) also quotes for serving another
purpose (with shameless inconsistency), bears the following
conclusion, viz. “We find not any one instance that Israel, in
renewing Covenant, did, at any time, repeat the form and words
of a former Covenant: Yea, it is plain they never did: Though
we have instances of their acknowledging and mourning over
the breach of former Covenants. Yet will Mr Nairn venture to
say, that Israel never renewed their Covenants? Or that, When
they entered of new into a Covenant,—they did thereby bury,
sopite and destroy former Covenants?”

III. As this adversary to Covenant-renovation teaches,—
that Christians, in covenanting, should have their attention
wholly turned away from any former attainments of this sort; he
sticks not at the monstrous absurdity of telling them, (p. 17.)
that they have an “express directory” for this [in Rev. iii. 3.]:
Remember how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and
repent. Strange! May he not now make anything a proof for
any thing! Is not this an express directory for the very reverse,
even for turning back their attention to former attainments; in
order to a holding them fast, with repentance for their failings in
that matter?

Well, but (says he, p. 17.) “The case may be illustrated by
a familiar example,—When Christians live by faith, or walk
in love, they are often repeating the same exercises of mind, and
performing over again the same duties: Yet no man who
understood the Gospel-scheme, would call their repeated
exercising of faith a renovation of their former exercise of it; or
their repeated acts of love a renewing of their former acts of it.”

But,

*See this at large, p. 259-272.
But, in general, it may well be reckon'd very odd,—to state a comparison betwixt permanent deeds in the Church, and transient acts in the mind; as if there could be any sense, in arguing from the one to the other. More particularly, as to the Gospel-scheme (here pedantically lugged in),—what need is there for any man to understand it, in order to prevent his calling things as above expressed? A moderate knowledge of the Common-sense-scheme, may certainly serve the purpose. For, though a like exercise or act can be performed of new,—no body will imagine, that the same exercise or act can be renewed; more than that the same time in which it took place can be recalled. And though some people cannot be beat off the notice of renewing Covenants; it never entered into their heads to think of renewing a former exercise or act of covenanting,—while it is of the nature of every exercise or act, that it can be performed but once. Yet will the Prefacer’s Gospel-scheme allow him to say, about a new act of faith or love, (as he argues about new covenanting),—that it contains no approbation of, no adherence to any former attainment or engagement in this matter!

If one should try to make sense of his illustration, it is a renewing of former faith or love about which he must be supposed to argue; that a Christian’s present faith or love, cannot be called a renewing of his former faith or love. Very true: But what then becomes of the comparison? For a Christian’s present faith and love cannot be called a renewing of the former, because it is just the very same with his former faith and love! Still the same one faith and love, that he has to exercise all his days; as much as still the same soul to exercise them.—And the Prefacer might have treated the understanding of his reader with more decency, than to befool it by such a senseless comparison.

IV. His finishing stroke to Covenant renovation, lies in a vile reproach cast upon it (p. 10.); as if, in opposition to a being led “directly to the word of God itself,”—men did thereby “make the appearances their fathers made for religion, the ground-work of their own covenanting.”—But is there no difference between a pattern and a ground work? Or doth a regard to former vows lie off
the road to God’s word? Or must a going forth by the footsteps of the flock—be now reckoned inconsistent with a going directly to the word of God itself?

This Prefacer will not refuse,—that he once solemnly vowed an adherence to some subordinate standards of religion, which were framed and avouched in the days of our fathers. But did he then take these standards for the ground-work of his religion? Or did he not take them for a proper guide,—as leading him directly to the word of God itself, for the ground-work of his religion?

These cases are quite parallel, as to the present argument. And indeed, as may be particularly laid open in an Appendix to the next volume of this work,—his new scheme is not only laid against Covenant-renovation; but it even wickedly strikes at the root of all covenanting-work, yea of all engagement to any subordinate standards or tests of orthodoxy, in any period of the Christian Church: All under the stale pretence, of going “directly to the word of God itself.”

V. What has been said may serve, for the Prefacer’s doctrine about Covenant-renovation: And another point, as very nearly connected with it, must now be considered,—his doctrine about Covenant-obligation; or about the binding nature of Solemn Covenants upon posterity,—In general, he explodes all that any mortal ever before meant by such obligation: And indeed, as to this point, he acts with self-consistency. For as the renewing of former Covenants just means an avouching the perpetual obligation of them, in a way and manner suited to our circumstances; all notion of renewing Covenants, either under the Old or New Testament, is destroyed of course,—by overthrowing that perpetual obligation.

The Prefacer’s doctrine, upon this head, lies in the following account that he gives of his party (p. 14, 15.) viz.

“The Burghers do maintain all scriptural covenanted principles, to the best of their knowledge; but they derive the obligation of these principles from the authority of God’s word;—they own, in the highest and noblest sense, the binding force of these Covenants of our forefathers:—They are persuaded, that no human oath can add any obligation to that which arises from “the
“the law of God: And yet they believe, that if we either omit the duties explicitly engaged to by our forefathers, whose transactions are known to us; or commit the sins they engaged to put away; in either of these cases, even our sin, in these matters, must have an higher aggravation of guilt and criminality. The nature of such sins of omission or commission, lies wholly in their being transgressions of the law of God; but the aggravations of such sins arise from their being done against these measures of light and conviction concerning known and acknowledged sin and duty, which render the transgressor of the law of God a self-condemned criminal. In this sense, the Burghers stedfastly maintain the obligation of our Solemn Covenants: And if the Anti-burghers understand it in any other sense,” (as they certainly do); “it is proper they should let the world know what they mean by it.”

But the world has not the smallest need to be let know, what these whom he calls Antiburghers mean in the present case: For they are sufficiently known to mean nothing by the obligation of Covenants, other than what all the world hitherto has understood to be the sense of the thing,—according to the common use of the words; that a being under the obligation of our Solemn Covenants, means a being parties covenanting in the loins of our fathers.*—However, this new-sense Prefacer might have given a good example; in letting the world know plainly what he means: Were it not that promoters of error, as it is their interest, do readily practise the art of keeping their meaning under a mask. Yet, in the present case, the mask may be easily taken off.

The

*This is certainly the only sense of Covenant-obligation, that ever entered into any mind till now. Accordingly, generations to come were considered, in their covenanting fathers, as parties then covenanting with God and covenanted with by him; so that they came long after to be punished, not merely as Law-breakers, but likewise as Covenant-breakers,—respecting the Covenant made by them and with them in their fathers: According to Deut. xxix. 14, 15, 24, 25.—And hence appears the atrocious nature of the Prefacer’s doctrine, about the Jews having never renewed Covenants; while, if every new covenanting among them did not import a renewing of all former Covenants,—it must have imported a perfidious renouncing of all the Covenant-obligation which they had been formerly brought under, in the loins of their fathers!
The foregoing account which he gives of his party, bears a
calamnious insinuation,—as if others derived the obligation of
their principles from some lower authority than that of God’s
word. And why? Because they plead a Covenant-obligation
upon themselves, to maintain these principles as derived only
from the authority of God’s word!—There is also some misty
doctrine here, about the nature and aggravation of sin; which
(beside that there is some nonsense in it*) is noway to his
purpose: Further than as it bears another calamnious
insinuation, that the friends of renewing Covenants are for
putting them into the place of the law of God;—and as it
excludes the breach of our Solemn Covenants from having any
place, even among the aggravations of our sin; by confining
these aggravations to a sinning against our “measures of light
and conviction,” which we may derive from these Covenants in
common with any other means.

But he gives a further opening of his mind, in representing
his party as “persuaded that no human oath can add any
obligation to that which arises from the law of God.”—Had he
said, that no human oath can add any authority to God’s law, or
make any increase of its obligatory power; every person who
stands in awe of blasphemy would have agreed with him. Or
had he said, that an oath can be of no real obligation, if contrary
in its matter to God’s law,—though it can make an obligation,
in some cases, where that law makes none; he would have been
liable to no contradiction. Or had he said, that the obligation of
oaths is subordinate unto and founded in the law of God,—so
that a breach of these is primarily a breach of that law; no fault
would have been found with his doctrine.—But here is a quite
different matter: Such a representation of his party (it is hoped
most injurious)

*He tells, that “the nature of sins—lies wholly in their being
transgressions of the law of God.” But guilt certainly belongs to the
nature of sin; and so, this must lie wholly in being a transgression of the
law of God. Yet he owns, that an acting contrary to the Covenant-
engagements of our forefathers—gives our sin “an higher aggravation”
(that is, an high additional weight) “of guilt.” So then, this guilt lies
wholly in acting contrary to the law of God; and yet partly in acting
contrary to these Covenant-engagements!——Primarily in the place of
wholly, would have salved the sense; but must have destroyed his
argument.
as tends to make them odious, among all who pay the smallest regard to the LORD’s name in any oaths whatsoever. For why should any oath be ever administered in any case, or why should a swearer make any account of his own oath in any case, or how can others have any dependence on a man’s oath in any case,—if no new obligation arises from oaths!—-

The law of God binds men; and this is *one* obligation, the primary obligation upon their consciences. But men also bind themselves by oaths; particularly by solemn vows of conformity to that law: And is not this *another* obligation,—an additional obligation, though subordinate? No; says the Prefacer: According to him, no human oath can add any obligation to that which men are previously under by the law of God: So that, beside the “guilt and criminality” which lies in *law-breaking*, there can be no additional “guilt and criminality” in *perjury* or *Covenant-breaking*; because there is no additional obligation, to be thereby trampled upon! What horrible doctrine, against all obligation of Oaths or Covenants!

Yet he has devised a new sense of such obligation; telling that, “in this sense, the burghers stedfastly maintain the obligation of our solemn Covenants.”——Well, what is the sense that he here means? It just amounts to this: That as we may derive measures of light and conviction about sin and duty, from what our forefathers did,—their transactions being known to us, while all histories of their times have not perished; so, a sinning against these our measures of light and conviction, is an aggravation of our guilt and criminality.

And is this to maintain, stedfastly to maintain the obligation of our solemn Covenants? Is this to “own, in the highest and noblest sense, the binding force of these Covenants of our forefathers?”—What sort of relation has all this to these Covenants; other than to the case of any Covenants in the Jewish Church, or to the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, or to the case of the Angels who kept not their first estate,—or to a thousand other things, from which we may in the same manner derive measures of light and conviction about sin and duty? And is this “the highest and noblest sense” of Covenant-obligation,—
gation,—this arrant nonsense, so impudently palmed upon
the world.

The real and dreadful issue of the matter, is,—that this
Prefacer’s doctrine wholly explodes the standing obligation of
our solemn Covenants upon posterity; it blots out the breaking,
burning and burying of these solemn Covenants,—from among
the grounds of the Lord’s controversy with this generation; and
upon the matter justifies all those wicked laws, by which their
standing obligation was condemned.

Section III. Of the Associate Presbytery’s Manner of
renewing our Solemn Covenants.

The Prefacer having offered up all Covenant-renovation, yea
and all Covenant-obligation, with all homage to God in solemn
covenanting,—as a great sacrifice to the idol of his own
malignancy; no wonder that the Associate Presbytery’s manner
of covenanting is next devoted by him to the same horrid
treatment.

The manner of renewing our solemn Covenants, as agreed
upon and enacted by them,—is in an Engagement to Duties,
following upon an Acknowledgment of Sins; which have been
fully exhibited in the preceding part of this Volume. That
Acknowledgment commences with the begun fall of
Reformation-work, in the last century; without going back upon
any mistakes or mismanagements, in the preceding work of
Reformation: Because evils of this sort cannot be properly
ranked among the standing grounds of the Lord’s controversy
with their posterity; or any other evils—but these which belong
to the succeeding course of apostasy from that Reformation.

The Bond, or Engagement to Duties, which follows upon
that Acknowledgment,—bears a general reference to the evils
which are therein particularly expressed; as an engagement to
contend and testify against the same: Evils which are noway
matters of doubtful disputation, among the genuine friends of
the Secession-cause; however much any of them be so among
others, in this corrupt generation. That Bond also particularizes
some of these evils; under the characters of Deism, Arianism,
Arminianism,—Independency,
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and *Latitudinarian* tenets: But these cannot justly be reckoned obscure things, in dark or ambiguous terms; because each of them is particularly defined and explained, in the preceding Acknowledgment.

The Prefacer’s audacious hostility against that solemn work, as attacking it on different sides,—is now to be considered. And,

I. He reproaches it (p. 10, 11, 15.) under the character of “the Antiburghers covenanting,—their form of covenanting,—the form of covenanting presently used by the Antiburghers.” But the present form of covenanting in *Scotland* as used by these whom he calls by that name,—is precisely the same, without the smallest addition or alteration, that was agreed upon by the Associate Presbytery in the year 1743. And therefore the Prefacer, for himself and his party, has hereby foully renounced all succession to the Associate Presbytery,—as to the state which the Secession-Testimony was brought unto among their hands: So that he cannot longer pretend, without intolerable absurdity and impudence,—as if they had “uniformly kept on the first grounds and original measures of the Secession;” and had “dropt no part of the Testimony they had espoused.” No; he must leave all this as the distinguishing character of those whom he now reproaches for their form of covenanting.

II. He declaims against this form of covenanting, upon the head of the *reduplication* which the Bond has upon the Confession*.——He tells us (p. 10, 11, 16.), that the

Confession

*The Prefacer has seen meet to pass by one topic of most senseless abuse, which has been committed upon this *Reduplication*.——It has been pretended, that the Bond thereby means a swearing to the historical truth of the facts represented in the Confession; a swearing, that the historical narration which it contains is true. But there is not one syllable in the Bond, which even seems to bear such a meaning; or to afford the smallest ground for imagining,—that it admits of any comparison with the case of ascertaining the truth of controverted facts, by the deposition of witnesses. Yea, it absolutely excludes any such meaning: Because the swearers of the Bond have been already making a solemn confession of the evils narrated, as true in point of fact,—excluding all controversy about the truth of the facts. And while their swearing necessarily supposes, that they are fully satisfied about the truth of all the facts narrated in the Confession,—having already made a solemn acknowledge-
Confession in the days of *Ezra and Nehemiah* “was evidently a previous exercise,—a distinct exercise from their covenating; their Covenant did not reduplicate upon their Confession, so as to embody that Confession into their oath and make it a part of their Covenant:” That “the Seceding Acknowledgment of Sins,—ought never to be reduplicated upon in their Bond, so as to become any part of their oath:” And that “the reduplication in their form of covenating, upon a long history of sins, is at best ensnaring; and is altogether unprecedented in Scripture.”

And here indeed is fine doctrine about Covenanting; which, if it means any thing at all, must mean,—that Covenanting should never contain an engagement to contend and testify against any sins whatsoever: For fear of embodying these sins into, and making them a part of the oath!—Moreover, is not the confession as much a previous exercise in the present case, as much a distinct exercise from Covenanting,—as ever it was in the days of *Ezra and Nehemiah*, or as ever it can possibly be; when the one exercise is quite finished and over, before the other be entered upon? And can the Covenant now be justly said to have one grain more of a reference unto or Reduplication

ledgment of them as such; it cannot be the truth of these facts, it can only be their own engagement to contend and testify against the evil thereof,—that they must be understood to swear unto, or to ascertain by their oath.

But the abuse of this hated Reduplication—has been carried to even a grosser absurdity: As if “it must imply, that they believe the truth of the Acknowledgment so much, as to be able to swear, that what therein is mentioned as evil is certainly so.”——Certainly, they must believe the truth of the Acknowledgment in all its parts; and they must believe, that whatever is therein mentioned as evil is certainly so: But they are not so stupid as to imagine,—that the morality of actions, or the nature of evils, is to be ascertained by oaths instead of arguments.

By such methods of reasoning, men evidently sacrifice the credit of their understanding to their malignancy. And all turns about to the same point which the Prefacer aims at; to defame and exclude all vowing to the Lord against prevailing evils,—while this cannot possibly be, without having a reference made to them in the oath: Such a reference or reduplication as belonged (though in a different form) to the Bond by which the National Covenant was renewed in the year 1638,—no less than to the Bond by which it is renewed in this period; as any body may see by comparing them.
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reduplication upon the confession, as to the matter of the thing,—than it had in Nehemiah’s time; when the Covenant was made [Neh. ix. 38.] expressly because of all this in the preceding confession?

The Prefacer’s language, about embodying the confession into the oath,—and making it a part of the Covenant, a part of the Oath, (which yet was altogether as much done in Nehemiah’s time as now); requires some other sort of understanding than the world can yet afford, to make sense of it: As the swearing a confession of sins, thus transforming either the confession or the sins into an oath, cannot but be rank nonsense.—And must every reference that an oath makes to any thing, be an embodying of that thing into the oath as a part of it? According to such reasoning, the oath of the Covenant in the year 1638 must have been a very monstrous oath. Yea, at this rate, every religious oath among Christians must be said to have all the Bible (even every history thereof) embodied in it,—made a part of it: And the religious clause of some burgess-oaths must be said to have all the laws of the land about religion, and even the Roman religion called Papistry,—all embodied into, and made a part of that oath!—But what will this Prefacer stick at; when he reckons it “ensnaring, and altogether unprecedented in Scripture,”—to come under solemn vows for contending and testifying against the grounds of the Lord’s controversy with this generation!

III. He declaims against the Associate Synod (p. 11, 12.) for still resting in that form of Covenanting which was agreed upon by the Associate Presbytery; which (says he) “cannot suit the present time:” Insisting that they should “enlarge their Acknowledgment of sins;” thus to have “a confession made of such sins as are in present being and strength.” And he uses two notable arguments, for this purpose:—One is (p. 12.) the example of “our forefathers;” they (says he) “having drawn up one acknowledgment of sins in 1638” (which was never before heard of!) “and another in 1648”: The other argument being a quotation (p. 13, 14.) from the Answers to Mr Nairn; which is merely an arguing against our being “obliged and confined unto a repetition of the same

“form
“form or words wherein our Covenants were conceived in the last century!”—Such arguments are only for being wondered at!

But, whatever the Prefacer thinks,—the Associate Synod reckons all the sins mentioned in their Acknowledgment, to be still “in present being and strength;” while the perpetration of many, and the guilt of all upon this generation, still is so: And let him reckon the opinion ever so extravagant; they are of opinion,—that the public corruptions which have taken place since the year 1743, are still materially the same corruptions (in an incorrigible progress thereof) which have been specified in that Acknowledgment; yea he himself (Survey p. 35.) calls them, “the manifest progress of the evils that occasioned the Secession.” Yet the Synod pretends to no perfection, in the management of the Lord’s work among their hands; it is with much struggling, that they have been enabled to hold fast what they have: And only a man of the Prefacer’s cast could use an invective about their not doing more, as an argument against what they do.

He makes a senseless but malicious guess (p. 12, 13.) at one reason, for their “neglecting to enlarge their Acknowledgment of sins;” as if this would oblige them to take in (what he calls “too strong an article) an approbation of all the censures they passed against the burghers.” But they would never find themselves obliged to this,—till once they found themselves obliged to make that approbation a term of communion among their people; which none of them has ever yet done: They have never imagined, and it is expected never will,—that a positive approbation of all church censures should have a place among the terms of communion.—Yet one thing is plain; that their still resting in their original form of Covenanting, must be very disagreeable to this Prefacer: Because it evidently shuts up him and his party, from a considerable advantage to their cause,—even from any occasion to declaim against the Synod for novelty in the manner of Covenanting.

IV. The Acknowledgment of sins is defamed (p. 13, 18.) as insisting on “many facts which cannot be certain—
“ly known;—that the bulk of common people can have no other certainty or knowledge about many things in their Confession of sins and Bond, but what depends upon the authority of their pastors;”—and that it is not “less antichristian,” to proceed in this manner (as to some facts and doctrines) “merely upon the authority of Seceding Ministers; than for the Roman Catholics implicitly to believe as their Church believes.” But a baser calumny cannot be devised, than a giving out,—that people are called to take some doctrines merely upon the authority of Seceding Ministers: And as little are people called to take any facts upon their authority; unless an expressing of most notorious facts, could be reckoned the same thing with an ascertaining of them!

But what is the ground of certainty or knowledge that people should have about facts, or that the nature of the thing can admit of? Is it any other than testimony?—A divine testimony, about the truth of any fact since the days of the Apostles, we cannot have; as no histories or records thereof are written by divine inspiration. We can therefore have no ground of certainty or knowledge about these, beyond what we ourselves have been eye or ear-witnesses of,—no other but human testimony; the nature of the things can admit of no other: And according to the most express divine warrant (Deut. xvii. 6. 2 Cor. xiii. 1.), we are to let our consciences rest upon this ground in such matters.

At the same time, as the Lord threatens a visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children; people are called (Levit. xxvi. 40.) to confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers: And how can this be done now,—unless they proceed upon human testimony, as to the iniquity of their fathers*? But the Prefacer’s doctrine about certainty and knowledge, as to matters of public confession before the Lord,—doth wickedly exclude all giving of glory

*A west-country minister of the established Church, already referred to in a note, when inveighing to his people against Covenanting-work among Seceders in his neighbourhood affirmed,—that a “believing things on the testimony of such as they think grave and learned men.” is “according to the doctrine of the Jesuits.” And is it an article of Jesuitism, to take facts on human testimony? After this, any thing!
glory to God, in lamenting over the iniquity of our fathers; yea over any iniquity whatsoever, except so far as a person (being an eye or ear-witness) is “certain from his own proper knowledge,”—as is expressed by one referred to in the note.

After all, it requires a great deal of assurance,—to represent the Acknowledgment of sins as containing any detail of uncertain facts; while all of them do lie in the most public and authentic histories and records of the kingdom: And though this Acknowledgment has now been lying before the world about thirty years, exposed to the criticism of many desperate enemies; none of them has ever yet been able to instruct one single falsehood in it. Yea, there never was any case since the days of the Apostles, nor can be to the end of time,—in which people had or can have better evidence to proceed upon, in confessing the iniquity of their fathers.—And must people be insulted, after all; as if they were proceeding with Popish or implicit faith, in this Solemn Work?

V. The Prefacer aims a finishing stroke at the Associate Synod (p. 13.), about their manner of renewing our Solemn Covenants; by telling that “they insist on many antiquated facts in their Confession of sins, which—have comparatively little influence on present conduct.”

These words are indeed but few; yet of great and horrid importance: As they contain the most daring outrage upon the work of bearing witness for Christ, yea upon the rights of the divine holiness,—that has ever been committed under the colour of friendship to our covenanted Reformation.

The Prefacer excepts none of the facts mentioned in the confession of sins, from the character of antiquated facts: Yea (whatever special respect he may have to some of an older date), he plainly includes them all under this character; because he inveighs against that Confession, as if it did not contain “a confession of such sins as are in present being and strength.”

Well; these many facts are, with him, antiquated facts: They are out of date, and should be out of head,—like an old Almanack. The oldest of them was not an hundred years back from the time of framing the Confession;

yet
yet they must all be considered now, as antiquated facts: Though facts above a thousand years back were confessed at covenanting in Nehemiah’s time,—under a very different consideration.

Such doctrine cannot be excused from this blasphemous import; that when the Lord brought dreadful evil upon Jerusalem, for the bloody crimes of Manasseh above an hundred years before,—he was dealing unjustly, as proceeding upon antiquated facts! And that if the Lord shall come to visit the iniquity of our fathers upon their children in this generation, though not yet the third and fourth generation,—he will be dealing unjustly, as proceeding upon antiquated facts!

And now the Prefacer has, by one bold stroke, blotted out all the grounds of the Lord’s controversy with this generation, all his indictment against them,—set forth in the Acknowledgment of sins; as a parcel of antiquated facts. He thus endeavours to make the generation quite easy about these matters; particularly, as if they had no reason to be apprehensive of the Lord’s making inquisition for the blood of his martyrs in this land: Or as if it were but an antiquated warning, that lies in Isa. xxvi. 21.

But however little influence these facts have upon the present conduct of this Prefacer, and such as he; it is to be hoped that a remnant shall be preserved, quite otherwise exercised about them before the Lord. And it is to be feared that a time will come when he and they, with confusion of face, will find the Lord’s then present conduct to be very greatly influenced by them.

C O N C L U S I O N

The Prefacer having finished his labours against Covenanting-work, he most natively supposes (p. 21.) that people would say, what his own conscience could not but say,—that he is “an enemy to Covenanting.” And he certainly is so, as really (however differently) as any who ever passed under the character of Malignants, in former days of Solemn Covenanting.

But, says he,—“I appeal against the objectors to the equity, candour and justice of every reader.” And in-
deed, though none of his readers, so far as in the exercise of reason, can excuse him from this enmity; many of them may favour him with a sort of justice that will excuse the enmity itself. Yet this will prove a cold comfort to him, when a deep necessity shall be found, some time or other,—for appealing that cause from another sort of Justice to the bar of Mercy.

Upon the whole, it is to be considered as one of the steps of the Lord’s righteous judgment upon a backsliding generation,—that he has permitted this man to rise up with a brow of brass, under a delusive mask of friendship to our covenanted Reformation,—for seducing the Lord’s people from any genuine regard to it, and for promoting the present apostasy from a witnessing profession.

So much for the Preface. When the Survey comes to be considered, there will appear a further verifying of that awful prediction,—*Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse.*

APPEN.
APPENDIX II.

A SERMON preached at the opening of the Synod of Perth and Stirling,—at Perth, October 10th 1732; by the Reverend Mr EBENEZER ERKINE Minister of the Gospel at Stirling*:

ON

Psalm cxviii. 22.

The Stone which the Builders rejected, the same is made the Head-stone of the Corner.

It is probable this Psalm was penned by David; when the Ark of God was brought up from the house of Obed-Edom, to its proper place in Jerusalem: After the intestine broils between the houses of David and Saul had happily issued,—in David’s promotion, by the common consent of all the tribes, to the crown and kingdom of Israel. But though this was the occasion, yet the Spirit of God had in it a further view; namely, to Christ himself,—of whom David, and his administrations in Israel, were but a faint type and shadow.

David’s accession to the throne was through many storms of opposition. Although God had chosen and ordained him for the kingdom and government, he was opposed by the house of Saul,—and them who adhered to that family; yet after all, the house of David prevailed. Just so was it with the Son of David, our glorious Redeemer. Hell and earth combined against the Lord and his Messiah; but God had determined that the government should be upon his shoulder, that his King should be set upon his holy Hill of Zion: And he carries his design against all opposers, as you see in my text; The stone which the builders rejected, the same is made the headstone of the corner.

I need not stay to prove, that these words are to be understood of Christ; after the express application that is made of them to

him

*This Sermon (referred to p. 26) was published under the following Title; The STONE rejected by the Builders, exalted as the Head-stone of the corner. And it is here added, as containing the ground of that process which issued in the Secession.

In this edition, the scriptures quoted are mostly not extended: but referred to, at the foot of the page. The quarrelled passages are printed in a larger character.
him by himself and his apostles, in the scriptures of the New-Testament. [Matth. xxi. 42. Acts iv. 11. 1 Pet. ii. 7. Eph. ii. 20.].

In the words we may notice the following particulars. 1. The metaphorical view in which the Church is here represented; namely, that of a house or building. 2. The character that our Immanuel bears with respect to this building; he is the Stone, in a way of eminence,—without whom there can be no building, no house for God to dwell in among the children of men. 3. The character of the workmen employed in this spiritual structure; they are called builders. 4. A fatal error they are charged with, in building the house of God; they refuse the Stone of God’s chusing, they do not allow him a place in his own house. 5. Notice the place that Christ should and shall have in this building, let the builders do their worst; he is made the Head-stone of the corner. The words immediately following declare how this is effected; and how the saints are affected with the views of his exaltation, notwithstanding of the malice of hell and earth: This is the Lord’s doing, and it is wonderful in our eyes.

In discoursing of this subject, I shall just follow the order of the text now laid down; by explaining the particulars named: And then deduce a few inferences from the whole.

FIRST, Let us take a view of the Church under the notion of a house or building. This metaphorical view of the Church is very frequent in the scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament*. Hence Paul, writing to Timothy,—directs him how to behave himself in the Church of God, which is the House of the living God.— ——Now with relation to this house or building, I offer the particulars following.

1st, That though God took up house with man at his creation, yet by the fall of Adam the family was skailt; God broke up house with man: The family was parted, and the breach was wide like the sea. God could have no fellowship with man; for what fellowship could there be betwixt light and darkness, betwixt God and Belial: And immediately man, like the prodigal, forsook God; and wandered into a far country of sin and vanity.

2dly, God had a stated design from eternity,—that notwithstanding of this breach, he would have a house and dwelling with fallen man; he designed to take up house, and gather the family again. Thence we are told,—that before the foundation of the earth, he rejoiced in the habitable part thereof; and his delights were with the sons of men. The foundation of this building was laid in the council of peace, and all the stones and materials of it were sequestrate and set apart: From the ancient years of eternity, Christ was chosen as the Foundation and chief Corner-stone; I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning; ere ever the earth was. And all the saints were elected as living stones; to be renewed, justified, adopted, sanctified, and eternally saved in him and through him†.

3dly,

* Isa. ii. 2, 3. 1 Cor. iii. 9. †Eph. ii. 4, 5.
Mr Erskine’s Synod-Sermon.

3dly, Before this designed building could go up, heaven must be at an infinite expense. Before one stone could be laid in the building, the glory of the infinite God must be vailed with a vail of flesh in the person of the eternal Son; the great Lawgiver must be made under his own law, God blessed for ever must be made a curse, and the Holy One of God made Sin. Justice had determined,—that without shedding of blood, there should be no remission of sin: And except justice was satisfied, and the honour of the law repaired; God could never dwell upon honourable terms with man upon earth. Oh, the expense that God is at in building this house! We must be redeemed from the hand of justice,—not with silver and gold, or such corruptible things; but with the precious blood of Christ.

4thly, Every stone of this building is digged out of the deep and dark quarry of nature; being dead in trespasses and sins, children of wrath even as others, alienated from the life of God through ignorance, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise. In a word,—there is not worse stuff in hell itself, than the stones of this building are by nature. And who can quarrel with the great Builder,—for taking one stone out of the quarry, and leaving another behind him as he has a mind: Only when we look to the rock whence we were hewn, and the pit whence we were digged; we may say, Who made us to differ? for a Syrian ready to perish was our father.

5thly, The great engine the glorious Builder makes use of, for gathering the stones of the building, and carrying on the edifice,—is the pure preaching of the everlasting gospel. This is what the Prophet foretells*. It pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. It is the gospel that is the power of God unto salvation; for therein is the righteousness of God revealed, from faith to faith†. When Christ sent forth his Apostles and Ministers, as founders of the New-Testament Church; what were they to do? Their commission was to go into all the world, and to preach the gospel to every creature under heaven: Go teach all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Hence the Apostle declares: The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God; and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ‡.

6thly, The Church thus gathered and united under Christ, as a glorious Head,—is the House of God, or his family upon earth. He has a manifold right unto her: A right by election, a right by redemption and purchase; a right by Covenant, and by possession. And if it is asked, what kind of a house is the Church of God? I answer,

1. It is his dwelling-house: In Salem is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place is in Zion||. God has no other rest amongst the children

*Isa. xxvii. 13. †Rom. i. 16, 17. ‡2 Cor. x. 4, 5. ||Psal. lxxvi. 2.
children of men, than his Church. The Lord hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his habitation; this is my rest, here will I dwell. So that the tabernacle of God is with men. And as a man takes pleasure in his house or lodging, so doth God take pleasure in his Church. The Lord taketh pleasure in his people, he will beautify the meek with salvation. I will dwell in them, and walk in them: and will be a father unto them; and they shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

2. The Church is his treasure-house. Here it is that he disposes of his most valuable furniture he hath in the world. Israel is his peculiar treasure; the Lord’s portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. Here he hath his crown and diadem: Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Here he hath his jewels as his people are called*; in comparison of whom, all the rest of the world are but trash. What is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord? Before he lose his jewels and his portion, he will sacrifice nations and kingdoms for their safety†.

3. The Church is his banqueting-house‡; Here it is he makes unto all people (in the external dispensation of the gospel) a feast of fat things; of vines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, wines on the less well refined: And here it is that the souls of believers are entertained with meat and drink indeed; the hidden manna, and the fruits of the tree of life: And here it is that he himself is entertained with the graces of his own spirit||.——Thus, I say, the Church is the house of the living God.

7thly, As the Church is the house of God, or his family; so Christ is the only door of the house§. No man can be reckoned a member of the Church, far less a Minister,—no, not in the judgment of charity; except he make a credible profession of his faith in Christ, and have a corresponding walk and conversation: And he that comes into the house of God, and lays claim to the privileges of the Church without it; the Master of the house in his own time will say to him,—Friend, how camest thou in hither? And they who adventure to confer the privileges of the Church upon those who have not come in by the door Christ; and who, in the view of the world, are of a malignant spirit,—enemies to the house of our God: These, I say, are guilty of casting that which is holy unto dogs, and of betraying the house of God, instead of ruling it to advantage.

8thly, Although this house or building be the object of the malice of hell and earth,—yet, as it has stood since its erection in Paradise; so it shall stand, while sun and moon endure in the firmament. Indeed particular Churches may be razed, but the Catholic universal Church shall stand the utmost efforts of the gates of hell. The Lord is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early: Hence is that song,—We will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be car-

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*Mal. iii. 17.  ||Cant. v. 1.
†Isa. xliii. 3, 4.  §John x. 1, 9.
‡Cant. ii. 4.
ried into the midst of the sea*. And all the storms that have blown upon her, from hell and earth,—have only served, by over-ruling Providence, to advance her true interest and glory†.

The SECOND thing proposed was—speak a little of the character here given unto Christ, with relation to this building; he is the **Stone**. There are a great many stones in a building; but in this spiritual building of the House of God, Christ is the **Stone**, in a way of eminence and excellence: As if the whole building were of one piece; intimating that Christ and his Church are so closely united, as to become one body and one spirit. Upon this account the whole building is called by the name of **Christ**, as the principal part thereof‡. I conceive that Christ is called the **Stone** here, for the same reason that he elsewhere calls himself a Rock; *upon this Rock I will build my Church*: To intimate that he is the strength and stability of his Church. Now the excellency and necessity of this **Stone**, to the rearing and building of the House of God,—will appear if we consider,

1. That he is the Stone of God’s *chusing*: Chosen of God and precious||; fore-ordained before the foundation of the world.

2. He is the Stone of God’s *approbation*. Though he be disallowed of men, he had his Father’s testimony from heaven with an audible voice; *this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*. And as he is approved of God, so he is approven of by every wise builder: They will be ready to say with Paul,—*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation; that Christ came into the world to save sinners*.

3. He is the Stone of God’s *trying*§. He was tried in the furnace of his Father’s wrath, and he abode the trial; for he came forth more glorious than ever, in his resurrection from the dead. He stood the trial of the rage of men and devils, who endeavoured to stop him in his redeeming work. All the saints in heaven, and all believers on earth, have tried him; and will give him this testimony, that he is able to save to the uttermost.

4. He is the only *living* and *life-giving* **Stone¶*. As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. He is the resurrection and the life, and all the stones of the building derive their life from him.

5. He is the Stone that is laid by the hand of Jehovah, as a *foundation in Zion**. He was laid decretively from eternity; he is laid doctrinally and declaratively in a preached gospel: And he is laid efficaciously in a day of power; when the sinner is, by the power of the eternal Spirit, determined to take hold of him by faith. He is laid as a foundation, and the only foundation of hope and help for perishing sinners. Men have been trying

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*Psalm xlvi. 2, 5. † Isaiah liv. 11, 12.
‡ 1 Cor. xii. 12. || 1 Peter ii. 4. Isaiah xlii. 1.
§ Isaiah xxviii. 16. ¶ 1 Peter ii. 4, 5. 1 John v. 12. Col. iii. 3.
**Isaiah xxviii. 16.
in all ages to lay other foundations, but still they have proven foundations of sand; another foundation can no man lay than that is laid, Christ Jesus. They who attempt to rear a church without Christ, or to build up to themselves a hope of salvation without him,—have only built castles in the air; and their building always turned to nought.

6. He is the matchless and incomparable Stone: For he is the Head-stone of the Corner: The brightness of his Father’s glory is in him, and the express image of his person. All created glory shrinks into nothing and darkness, when he appears; for he is fairer than the children of men, as the apple-tree among the trees of the wood: And he casts a lustre and glory on the whole building, and every stone in it; for we are beautiful through his comeliness, the beauty of the Lord is upon his saints.

The THIRD thing to be discoursed a little, was of the workmen employed in this spiritual building or fabric of the Church; here called Builders. Christ himself is the principal builder, to whom the work is committed*: But he employs officers under him, for the on-carrying of the work; and these are called builders. Kings, and those in civil authority,—when, in their sphere, they lend their helping hand to advance and carry on the work of God; may be called builders of the Church: But under the New Testament, I find this term only applied to Ministers of the Gospel; ordinary or extraordinary. He gave some apostles and prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers†. For what end? It is for the edifying of the Church, or building the body of Christ. And Paul declareth‡, —that according to the grace given him, he, as a wise master-builder, had laid the foundation. So that Ministers of the gospel are especially the New Testament builders.—Now, with relation to them, there are only these few things I suggest.

1. It is a very honourable employment to be a builder of the House of God: It is an employment wherein the Son of God as Mediator is engaged; and is it not an honour, to be co-workers with him? David esteemed it an honour, to be a door-keeper in the House of our God; but it is yet more so, to be a builder of the House. And as the work is honourable, so the reward of grace is proportioned; for if we keep the charge committed to us in building the House of God, we shall have place among them that stand by the heavenly throne: And they that be wise, shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.

2. None can warrantably lay a stone in this building, except he be regularly called. What mason will put his hand to a building, unless he be employed by these that have warrant to call him:

*Zech. vi. 12, 13. †Eph. iv. 11, 12. ‡1 Cor. iii. 10.
This is a thing so necessary, that Christ himself would not meddle in building his Father’s House till he had his Father’s call*. There is a twofold call necessary, for a man’s meddling as a builder in the Church of God; there is the call of God, and of his Church. God’s call consists, in his qualifying a man for the work; and inspiring him with a holy zeal and desire, to employ these qualifications for the glory of God and the good of his Church. [The call of the Church lies in the free choice and election of the Christian people. The promise of conduct and counsel, in the choice of men that are to build,—is not made to patrons, heretors, or any other set of men; but to the Church, the body of Christ,—to whom apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are given. As it is a natural privilege of every house or society of men, to have the choice of their own servants or officers; so it is the privilege of the House of God in a particular manner. What a miserable bondage would it be reckoned, for any family to have stewards or servants imposed on them by strangers; who might give the children a stone for bread, or a scorpion instead of a fish, poison instead of medicine? And shall we suppose, that ever God granted a power to any set of men,—patrons, heretors, or whatever they be,—a power to impose servants on his family, without their consent; they being the freest society in the world?] But I pass this at present; perhaps more of it may occur afterwards.

3. The builders of the House of God, are not left to form or mould the house according to their own fancy; no, but they must follow the pattern shewed in the holy Mount of divine Revelation.

When the Tabernacle was reared, a plat-form of it was given to Moses. When the Temple was to be built, a pattern of it was given to Solomon by his father. And every pin of the Tabernacle and every stone of the Temple, was to be regulated and disposed according to the divine order. Now these were but types of the New-Testament building, whereof we now speak. Who builds a house, without forming a plan of it to the builder? Who erects a society, without giving orders about its government! They who assert the government of the Church to be ambulatory, cast a reflection on the wisdom of God,—which is not to be supposed of any wise man whatever. Now, I say, as builders of a house must renounce their own schemes, and follow the order of the owner; so Ministers and Church-officers, in building the House of God, must renounce carnal policy and the wisdom of the world; and

*Heb. v. 4, 5.
follow the orders given by God in his word, the perfect rule of faith and manners both to Ministers and Church members. What the particular model of the Church should be, is a thing, I hope, beyond controversy amongst us; who are solemnly engaged to maintain the doctrine, discipline, worship, and government of this Church: And therefore I do not enter upon it now.

4. God has endowed men whom he calls to build his House, with different talents and abilities; according to the different services they are to be employed about in the work. There are a great variety of gifts bestowed by Christ upon his Ministers, all calculated for the good of the Church of God in general: The Apostle illustrates this argument at great length, (1 Cor. xii), through the whole of the chapter. If this were but duly considered, it would cure all manner of strife and emulation among the builders; that they should not grudge one against another.

5. The gifts of men, however edifying or well adapted for carrying on the work, will never do service without the blessing and countenance of the great Master Builder. *Paul may plant, and Apollos water; but God giveth the increase.* And it is well, that it is so ordered of infinite wisdom; that men may not give greater glory to instruments than is due, and that the whole glory may redound to the Lord: For this end, he puts the treasure in earthen vessels,—that the excellency of the power may be of him.

6. The work of God is many times exceedingly marred, through the weakness or wickedness of pretended builders. But this leads me to the

FOURTH thing proposed; which was to speak of the fatal error of these builders spoken of in my text: They reject the Stone, without which their whole building was nothing but a medly of confusion: however glorious it might appear in their own eyes, *The Stone is rejected by the builders.*

They seemed to have a great zeal for the Messiah and his kingdom; yet when he comes, they do not allow him a room in his own House. *He came unto his own, and his own received him not:* And so they fulfilled Isaiah’s prediction of him*. And because they rejected him, he hath rejected them as a Church and nation: And, Oh! how happy had it been,—if their error and ruin thereupon had served as a beacon to other Churches since their day, not to dash upon the same rock. But here a question naturally arises,—How did the Jewish builders reject the Stone which God had ordained to be the chief Stone of the Corner? *Answer,* This came about through a great many corruptions which they introduced, both in principle and in practice. I shall only name a few of them; [and leave it to every one to judge, how far such evils or corruptions are to be found in our own day.]

1. Though they pretended a great regard unto the holy law of God, and cried out upon Christ and his Apostles as enemies to it;

*Isa. liii. 2, 3.*
yet they narrowed and contracted the sense and meaning of it, confining it merely to
the letter,—without searching into its extent and spirituality; which gave occasion
unto Christ’s Sermon on the Mount. By these means, though their hearers might have
some notions of moral honesty; yet could they have no notion of the depravation of
nature, and of the deceit and desperate wickedness of their hearts: Without which no
man can ever know the need he has of the work of regeneration, or of a Saviour from
sin.

2. Having pared off the spiritual meaning of the law, they sought justification
by the works thereof; and thought a man’s own personal obedience enough to
recommend him to God*. They could frame no notion to themselves, of justification
by the imputed righteousness of the Messiah: Though God had told them, that their
righteousness and their works could not profit them; that it was a bed too short, and a
covering too narrow for them.

3. These builders, through the legality of their doctrine, shut up the kingdom
of heaven against men; they would neither enter themselves, nor suffer others that
were entering to enter. God had told them, that the blessings of his Covenant must be
had without money or price; but they would needs palm their legal qualifications
upon God, and barter the matter with him: And thus instead of casting out the stones,
or preparing the way of the people†; they threw stones and stumbling-blocks in the
way of the salvation of sinners by the Messiah.

4. These builders deadened the ordinances of God, by their formality. Though
they retained the shell of ordinances, they never regarded the end,—either with
respect to their own souls, or the souls of their people; which was fellowship and
communion with God therein; for which reason, God declareth his abhorrence of his
own institutions‡. One of the great sources of this evil was,—that if a man had been
trained up at the feet of Gamaliel for a few years, and got a smack of the learning then
in vogue; it was enough in their opinion to qualify him for being a builder in the
House of God, though in the mean time he was an utter stranger to the work of grace
on his soul: As is evident from the instance of Nicodemus; who, when Christ tries
him upon the head of regeneration, he babbles and speaks nonsense, (John iii. 4.)
How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his
mother’s womb and be born. Hence is that sharp challenge, (ver. 10) Art thou a
master of Israel, and knowest not these things? There Christ speaks of it as a thing
criminal,—that men should be made teachers of the Church, who were strangers to a
work of grace; for what but dead formal worship could be performed, by men dead in
trespasses and sins.

5. They were continually dabbling in politics, gave themselves up to the
conduct of carnal wisdom and policy in the matters of

God

*Rom. ix. 31, 32. x. 3. 
†Isa. lxii. 10. 
‡Isa. i. 11,12, etc.
God and of his Church; and through this carnal wisdom, they were led on to crucify the Lord of glory*. When once a Church comes to stand upon the rotten prop of carnal wisdom and policy, she is near unto ruin. It is true, ministers are to be wise as serpents; but the wisdom of the serpent will soon lead us off our feet into pernicious courses, if not attended with the simplicity of the dove: And therefore we need, that in simplicity and godly sincerity,—not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God,—we should have our conversation in this world.

6. [The Jewish builders valued themselves exceedingly upon their connection with the rulers and great folk in that day; and having joined interest with them, treated the common people, especially those who owned Christ and attended his ministry, and that of his apostles,—as an un-hallowed mob; as is clear from (John vii. 45, etc); where they having sent some of their officers to apprehend Christ, the officers return, declaring,—that never man spake like this man. To which the Pharisees reply, Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people, who know not the law, are accursed. As if the common people had been obliged to follow them, and the rulers with whom they connected themselves, by an implicit faith and obedience; without ever bringing their doctrine and actings to the bar of the law and testimony, to be tried there].

7. They and the rulers having got the ascendant in the Sanhedrin, and other courts; they took care to keep the power upon their side, by bringing in none but men of their own stamp and spirit: And if any man adventure to open his mouth, or testify against their corruptions in principle or practice,—presently combinations are formed, plots are laid; and the edge of the Church’s discipline, which they had grasped, is turned against him as a turbulent person, an enemy to the law and temple;—as is clear from their management with Christ, his apostles, and the protomartyr Stephen. But yet notwithstanding of their pretended regard to the temple, they admitted the buyers and sellers to enter into it; whereby they turned that holy place into a den of thieves, as Christ tells them to their face†. And whatever regard they pretended to the law, by a shew of sanctity before the world; yet they abandoned themselves to all manner of secret and heart wickedness: Hence our Lord compares them unto painted sepulchres; glorious without, but within full of dead men’s bones and rottenness‡.

Again,

*John xi. 47, etc.
†John ii. 16. Matth. xxi. 13.
‡Matth. xxiii. 27.
Again, however careful they were to cloak and palliate their secret wickedness, yet now and then it was breaking out; to the great scandal and offence of the poor people of God: By which means they made themselves contemptible, and caused many to stumble at the law,—and abhor the sacrifices of the Lord, as administrate by them*.

Having lost the hearts of the people by these means, they gave themselves up to all manner of sloth and indolence; taking care to feed their own bellies, and enrich themselves with the good of this world; while, in the mean time, they entirely neglected the flock and heritage of God. Hence is that charge against them by the prophet Isaiah†.

Those Jewish rulers ruled the Lord’s people with rigour, invaded their freedoms and liberties, bound heavy burdens on them which they themselves would not touch with one of their fingers; and by this means the Lord’s people were scattered from the worship of God in their synagogues, as sheep having no shepherd. Hence is that plain dealing by the prophet Ezekiel‡.

In short, to such a degree of corruption were they arrived; that the holy and prophane, the clean and unclean, were alike to them,—providing they were of their way and party||.

Thus the Jewish Church, and particularly her pretended builders, we see were sunk into the very dregs of corruption. And hence it came, that when the glorious and long looked for Messiah actually appeared among them, upon the stage of this world; instead of giving him a reception suitable to his excellency, as Immanuel God-Man, they treated him with the utmost contempt. Though he opened his commission,—and made it evident to the world by his doctrine, miracles, and the whole of his conversation, that he was none other than the brightness of his Father’s glory; yet they disparaged his person, denied his supreme Deity, esteeming him only as the son of the carpenter: Contradicted his doctrine; and studied to obscure his miracles, by ascribing them to the power of Beelzebub the prince of devils. They blackened his character with reproaches,—as though he had been a glutton, a wine biber, a friend of publicans and sinners; and at length crucified him ignominiously, as though he had been a notorious impostor, betwixt two thieves. And when after his resurrection from the dead, he came to them in the ministry of his apostles,—bringing his righteousness and salvation near unto them, they finally rejected him and all the offers of his grace: For which reason, God was provoked, by a heavy sentence of excommunication, to cut them off from being a Church or nation,—under which they are lying to this day; his blood being upon them and upon their children, according to their wish at his crucifixion. And thus we see,

*Mal. ii. 8, 9. †Isa. lvi. 10, 11.  
how the Stone of God’s chusing was rejected by the builders. Let their example and ruin serve as so many beacons; that we of the Gentile Churches may not dash ourselves upon the same Church-ruining and soul-destroying rocks: Which is the very use the Apostle Paul makes of this subject, when writing to the Romans*. Which melancholy event actually happened unto the Church of Christ at Rome, as we see at this very day; it being now the seat of Antichrist, and a synagogue of Satan.

The only thing that remains upon this head, is to answer the following question, viz. Whence was it that the Jewish builders rejected Christ, the stone of God’s chusing, trying and laying?

(1.) This fatal error of theirs proceeded from their ignorance of Christ, in the excellency of his person; and of the glorious mystery of redemption and salvation through him†. They were men of no despicable parts, capable enough to toss an argument, they thought themselves the only seers in Israel in their day: Are we blind also? Yet Christ declares them blind like moles, in things relating to his kingdom. The least of Christ’s babes, whom they reckoned among the accursed mob,—had more of the saving knowledge of God, and of the things of God, than they; and the blind leading the blind, both stumbled on the stumbling-stone,—and fell into the ditch together.

(2.) Mistaken notions of the nature of the Messiah’s kingdom, was another cause of their rejecting this precious Stone. They had formed a notion to themselves, without any real ground from scripture prophecy,—that the Messiah was to appear in the form of an earthly monarch; and that he was to lift up the head of the Jewish nation, and make the Romans and all the nations of the world their vassals and tributaries: But finding themselves mistaken, they disown and crucify him as an impostor. Which, by the bye, serves to discover what a dangerous thing it is,—not to have right conceptions of the spiritual nature of Christ’s kingdom. [I am persuaded, that carnal notions of the kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world,—lie at the bottom of many of the evils and corruptions in the day we live in.]

The FIFTH thing in the method was, to enquire what may be implied in Christ’s being made the Head-stone of the corner; notwithstanding of the attempts of the builders to justle him out of his place?

1. It implies Christ’s exaltation and victory over all his enemies and opposers; he will have the better of them, let them do their worst. However Christ and his cause, interest and people, may be born down for a while; yet the scales will turn, and like the house of David they shall prevail. Christ was personally oppressed and afflicted; he drank of the brook in the way. Yet at length he lifted up the head; and God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name

*Rom. xi. 20, 21, 22.  †Acts iii. 17.  1 Cor. ii. 7, 8.
name above every name. And as it was with Christ personal, so will it be with his injured members. However they be afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted; yet God will lay their stones with fair colours, and their foundations with sapphires. Though Zion may be laid in ashes, yet she shall be built up again by the Mighty LORD: And when the Lord brings her forth to the light,—then shame shall cover her who said, Where is the LORD thy God?

2. It implies, that God has a great regard for the glory of his Son, as the Head and King of his Church; and that it is his will that all men should honour him, as they honour the Father. This was intimated by a royal mandate, issued forth from the excellent glory: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. God does not reckon it any injury done to him as God Creator, that we worship and serve him in the person of the Redeemer; for his name is in him: His glory, majesty, and other excellent perfections, are in him as they are in the Father; and therefore it is his will,—That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

3. It implies, that the whole spiritual fabric or building of the Church hangs upon him; as the superstructure leans upon the foundation and chief corner stone. He shall build the temple, and bear the glory; says the prophet Zechariah: And Isaiah (xxii. 24.), They shall hang upon him all the glory of his Father’s house. All the doctrines of the Church, and truths of the everlasting gospel, lean upon him. He is the Alpha and Omega. Hence we read of the truth as it is in Jesus: They meet in him, as the spokes of a wheel in the nave. All the promises meet in him, they are in him yea and amen. All the precepts lean upon his authority, for the law is the law of Christ; it is his yoke and burden. The whole discipline of the Church hangs upon him. The keys of doctrine and discipline hang at his girdle. The government of the Church pertains to him; for it is laid upon his shoulder. The ordinances and worship of the Church hang on him; no sort of worship, or a part of worship can be admitted, but what bears the impression of his institution. The officers of the Church hang upon him, for their commission and success in their work; in a word, all the members of the Church hang upon him. The whole offspring and issue, the vessels of small quantity, from vessels of cups to vessels of flagons,—hang on him; as a nail in a sure place.

4. His being made the Head-stone of the corner implies, that he is the alone center of unity in the Church: for the head-stone of the corner knits the whole building together; and if that be removed, the walls of the house fall asunder,—and so the whole fabric is ruined. If we do not hold the Head-stone of the corner, by which the whole building is supplied and knit together; the fabric of a Church, however politically framed, can never stand long.
And the reason why the house is tottering at this day, is because there is too much of a receding from the Corner-stone. Usually indeed in a time of defection, the pulpits of these builders whose hands are deepest in it,—ring with the doctrine of peace; and if a tongue be moved against the corrupt measures they are going into, the cry is raised,—*These that turn the world upside down, are come hither also.* While in the mean time, it is such as depart from the Corner-stone that ruin and tear the building; and not they who give warning to the house or family, of its being in danger of falling. They who do give warning may lay their account to be beaten by their fellow builders, that are losing the Corner-stone. But this needs be no surprise, for in all ages Christ’s witnesses have tormented them that dwell upon the earth: And it needs be no discouragement; for though they may be killed and buried, yet there will be a resurrection both of names and persons.

5. His being the Head-stone of the corner implies, that Christ is the beauty and ornament of his Church: For much of the beauty and ornament of the building lies in the corner-stone. We are told,—*The daughters of Zion were like corner-stones polished after the similitude of a palace.* Christ is the glory of his people Israel; and no wonder, for he is the brightness of his Father’s glory. When he is in the midst of his Church, countenancing his ordinances and judicatories; then it is,—*she looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.* But when he departs, all the glory departs; and a dismal Ichabod succeeds: *Yea, woe also unto them when I depart from them:* As may be seen at this day, in the once famous Churches of Lesser Asia; and other places where Christ had once flourishing Churches. They departed from the chief Corner-stone in doctrine, discipline, worship, and government; and this provoked him to depart: And, upon his departure, the songs of their temples were turned into howlings.

6. It implies, that they who would build the Church of Christ must still have him in their eye; and that the whole of their conduct and administration in the house of God, must be regulated with a view to his glory and honour. If, in building a house, the chief corner-stone be not kept in view,—irregular work cannot miss to ensue: Just so is it in the case in hand; if we shall pretend to build the house of God, and do not keep our eyes on Christ and his honour and interest, whether in matters of discipline or doctrine,—instead of building the Church, we do but disorder and disturb it, and throw all into confusion. When we begin to work by carnal policy,—or to have a squint eye upon serving the lusts and humours of men, great or small; or our own worldly interests, and not the glory of our Great Redeemer: We but ruin and pull down the Church of Christ, instead of building it; and are fair to bury our name, our ministry, and our own souls, and the souls of multitudes,—in the rubbish of it. Therefore there is much need of disinterested views, in the management of the affairs of Christ. We that are Ministers, as well as others, had much need to
to learn the lesson of self-denial: To deny our own wisdom, and our worldly interests,—as a trifle in respect of his glory, and the advancement of his kingdom.

7. The text implies, that God and corrupt builders are driving quite different measures and designs. The builders reject the Stone, but God will have it to be the Head-stone of the Corner; and which of the parties shall prevail, it is easy to judge. Christ shall sit at his Father’s right hand, till all his enemies be made his footstool. He will break them that rise up against him, as a potter’s vessel: I have set my King, says the Lord, upon my holy Hill of Zion; and who is he that will dethrone him?

What was last proposed in the method, was the APPLICATION of the whole. All the use I shall make of what has been said, shall be wrapt up in the following Inferences.

1st, From what has been said, we may see the excellency of the Church of Christ: She is a building, an house for God to dwell in among the children of men. So valuable is this building, that this whole visible creation is only as a theatre or scaffold for rearing the house; and whenever the building is completed, the scaffold will be taken down and committed to the flames. To discover the high estimate God puts upon his Church, he calls her by the most endearing names and epithets. He designs her his spouse, his love, his dove, his undefiled, his treasure, his portion, his Hephzibah and Beulah, his bed; his resting-place, his walking-place, and his dwelling-place. A whole Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,—lay themselves out in their particular economy, for the up-building of this house: The grace of the Father, the love and blood of the Son, and all the gracious influences and operations of the Holy Ghost,—are laid out for carrying on the work. The whole administrations of providence, in the government of the world,—are adjusted for the benefit of the Church, and the faithful members thereof. For this end the reins of administration, the keys of hell and death,—were committed into the hands of Christ; for God hath given him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body. The Father hath put all things into the hand of the Son; that so all the wheels of providence might be rolled and turned about for the good of them that love him, and who are the called according to his purpose. The whole institution and administration of gospel ordinances, and all the officers of his ordination, whether ordinary or extraordinary,—are designed for her edification*.—This may let us see what a valuable trust we have among our hands, to whom God has committed the affairs of the Church; and how tenderly it concerns us to manage them, even like those who are to make an account to the great Lord of the house.

2dly, Is Christ the Stone in a way of eminence? Then we may see how necessary and useful it is to preach Christ. He is the Stone by way of eminence; the Stone of God’s laying, of his chusing,

*Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13.
and the Stone which God will have for the Head-stone of the Corner, Paul, as a wise master-builder, laid this foundation among his hearers; and declares that another foundation can no man lay. It is Christ whom we preach: I, says he, determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. The whole of the scripture revelation meets in him as its centre: All the histories, prophecies, promises, types, precepts, doctrines, and ordinances of the word,—they are just full of Christ. The whole Bible, what is it, but the Testament of Christ; and the testimonial that Christ brought from heaven? These are they which testify of me. These things are written, that ye may believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in him. And to be sure, what is the scope of the whole revelation of the mind of God in the word,—ought to be the scope and design of all our sermons. Whatever particular doctrines we insist upon, ought still to be grafted upon the blessed branch that springs out of the root of Jesse; for the truth is only right dispensed, and right known, as it is in Jesus.

Hence the great Mr Durham tells us (in his first sermon on Isa. liii.), “That Christ stands under a fourfold relation to preaching: 1. He is the Text of all; all preaching is to explain him,—and that preaching that does not stand in relation to him, is a preaching beside the text. 2. He is the ground work and foundation of preaching; so that preaching without him wants a foundation, and is but building castles in the air. 3. He is the great end of preaching; namely, to set him on high in the hearts and affections of our hearers: The design of preaching is not to make ourselves but our Master, great; to cause his name to be remembered. 4. He is the very power and life of preaching, for he is the power of God and the wisdom of God: And the gospel is called the power of God unto salvation; for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.”—Thus far that great man.

3dly, If the Ministers of the Gospel be builders of the house; then see hence the need of trying a man’s acquaintance with Christ, and the power of religion,—before he is admitted into ministerial communion, as a fellow builder in the house of God. Why; that man who is not really acquainted with Christ in an experimental way, may be fair to reject the stone of God’s chusing; and to ruin the building, and bury himself and many souls in the ruins of it. Masons know one another; they have certain signs and words, by which, they are capable to distinguish men of their own art and business from others: So, skilful builders in the house of God are capable, by a spiritual discerning,—to know who are fit for being admitted to the work of the Lord, and who not. If such a discerning be given even unto Church members, as to try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world*: Much more may it be supposed, that this discern-

*1 John iv. 1.
ing faculty is to be found among faithful Ministers of the Gospel. Hence is that of the Apostle to Timothy,—*The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men; who shall be able to teach others also*.

4thly, Is it so, that the Stone is rejected by the builders? Then see hence what a fatal and pernicious thing,—a corrupt, erroneous and ignorant ministry is to the Church of Christ. Why; they spoil, mar and destroy the whole building: They run counter to the great plot of heaven; by casting away the Stone, which God has ordained to be the chief Stone of the Corner. The new mode of preaching some men have fallen into, with their harangues and flourishes of morality,—while Christ is scarce named, from the beginning to the end of their discourse; I look on as a plot of hell to throw out the Corner-stone, in order to bring us back into heathenish or antichristian darkness. Christ is the light of the world; and if he be removed, or shuffled out, where are we,—but just in the *dark places of the earth*, which are full of the *habitations of cruelty*? So that, I say, a corrupt ministry, whatever be their fine parts,—are the very bane of the Church of Christ.

5thly, If it be God’s great design, that Christ should be the chief Stone of the Corner; if this, I say, be the resolution of Heaven: Then see hence, that all the attempts of hell for the depressing of Christ, and the ruin of his cause,—whether by open enemies or pretended builders,—shall be abortive in the issue. For the counsel of the Lord shall stand and he will do all his pleasure; in spite of hell and earth. And what is his pleasure and counsel? Why, here it is: *The Stone which the builders rejected, the same shall become the Head-stone of the Corner.* The gates of hell have made many an attempt, to get the Stone of God’s chusing rejected,—in order to the ruin of the Church; but they have never yet prevailed, and never shall: Infinite Wisdom hath always taken the wise in their own craftiness, and turned the counsel of the froward headlong; and made these very devices of hell and its instruments, subservient to lift the Corner-stone higher in the building,—to the shame and ruin of those who attempted to reject it. This *little stone cut out of the mountain*, hath always proved too hard for all the metals that clashed with it; and it will be so to the end of time.

6thly, See from what is said, what it is that makes a flourishing Church. It is not her external peace, plenty or prosperity; nor her connection in politics with Kings or Parliaments,—patrons, heritors, or any other set of men: But her connection with the chief Corner-stone. This, and this only, is what beautifies the whole building; and makes her increase with the *Increase of God*.

7thly, See hence, great ground of lamentation and humiliation at this day. The Stone is rejected, which God would have to be the chief Stone of the Corner. Is he not rejected in his prophetical office; through the prevailing ignorance and unbelief that is to be found among the hearers of the gospel? The old complaint

*2 Tim. ii. 2.*
may still be renewed in our day, *Who hath believed our report?* Is he not rejected in his priestly office; while the generality, with the Jews, go about to *establish their own righteousness,*—and refuse the righteousness of God? And is he not rejected in his kingly office and headship in his Church; by the abounding prophaneness, atheism and immorality of our day: By the generality of professed Christians, their breaking his bonds and casting his cords from them? I cannot now stand, to give a full narrative of the injuries which have been done to the royal prerogative of this King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

The Roman Antichrist has for a long time invaded the prerogative of the Son of God, by usurping a headship over the Church; *He sitteth in the Temple of God, and exalteth himself above all that is called God.* At the imperfect Reformation of England, when they threw off the Pope as head of the Church; they lodged the same in the King, declaring him to be the supreme head in all causes civil or ecclesiastic. In the late days of Scotland’s apostasy from God, the crown was sacrilegiously taken from Christ’s head among us also; and set upon the head of a persecuting Apostate. Dreadful were the invasions and encroachments that were made upon the Crown-royal of the King of Zion,—by Kings, Parliaments, and persons of all ranks: Particularly by the act rescissory,—whereby axes and hammers were lifted up upon the carved work of the Temple; hewing down the glorious work of Reformation, restoring abjured Prelacy, rescinding the obligation of our solemn Covenants,—yea, ordering them to be burnt at the Cross of Edinburgh, by the hand of the common hangman; persecuting to the very death, all that owned a work of reformation.

In these bloody days, the headship and sovereignty of Christ was contended for by many of the Lord’s worthies; even unto death: And it has been the peculiar honour of the Church of Scotland, particularly in these days of persecution,—to bear testimony unto Christ, as the alone Head and King of his Church; in opposition to these dangerous and heaven-daring encroachments that were made upon it. And it is much to be regretted and lamented,—that, since the Lord turned back our captivity in any measure at the late wonderful Revolution, whereby we were freed from the yoke of lordly prelacy; we have not been so zealous for our great King and his prerogatives, which were so much invaded, as might been expected upon our deliverance from that Egyptian thraldom. [I do not remember of any particular act of Assembly, since the Revolution,—whereby the rights of the Crown of Christ are asserted, in opposition to the encroachments that were made upon them in these days of public apostasy and persecution]. Yea, instead of that, are there not invasions and encroachments made upon the authority of Christ, and the immunities of his kingdom,—even since that period. Particularly in the end of Queen Anne’s reign, when designs were

*formed*
formed for the overthrow of a Protestant succession; his headship and authority was invaded by an almost boundless toleration of all errors in doctrine, and corruptions in worship: Excepting Popery and blasphemy against the Holy Trinity,—two evils that never prevailed more in the memory of man in these lands, than since the toleration-act was passed. His authority was at the same time invaded by the act restoring patronages; whereby power is given to a malignant Lord or Laird to present a man to take the charge of precious souls, who has perhaps no more concern about their salvation than the Great Turk. And is it not matter of lamentation,—to see some of the judicatories of this Church, whose province it is to contend for the sovereignty of Christ and the rights of his subjects, falling in with patrons and heritors of the nation; in opposition to the known rights of the Christian people, to elect and chuse their own pastors? How are the rights of the Lord’s people invaded and trode upon, by violent settlements up and down the land? [A cry is gone up to heaven against the builders, by the spouse of Christ; like that (Cant. v. 7.): The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my vail from me. A cry and complaint came in before the bar of the last Assembly, for relief and redress of these and many other grievances; both from Ministers and people: But instead of a due regard had thereunto, an act is passed confining the power of election unto heritors and elders; whereby a new wound is given to the prerogative of Christ, and the privileges of his subjects].

I shall say the less of this act now,—that I had opportunity to exoner myself with relation to it, before the National Assembly where it was passed. [Only allow me to say,—that whatever Church-authority may be in that act, yet it wants the authority of the Son of God. All ecclesiastical authority under heaven is derived from him; and therefore any act that wants his authority, has no authority at all. And seeing the Reverend Synod has put me in this place, where I am in Christ’s stead; I must be allowed to say of this act, what I apprehend Christ himself would say of it were he personally present where I am;—and that is, that by this act the Corner-stone is receded from; he is rejected in his poor members, and the rich of this world put in their room: If Christ were personally present, where I am by the Synod’s appointment in his stead; he would say, in reference to that act,—Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these.
these little ones, ye did it to me. By this act, Christ is rejected in his authority; because I can find no warrant from the word of God, to confer the spiritual privileges of his House upon the rich beyond the poor: Whereas, by this act, the man with the gold ring and gay clothing—is preferred unto the man with the vile raiment and poor attire]. I add further of this act,—that I judge it inconsistent with the principles and practice of the best reformed Churches, asserted in their public Confessions of Faith; and particularly with the known principles of this Church since the Reformation, asserted in our Books of Discipline,—which we are bound by solemn covenant to maintain. I am firmly persuaded,—that, if a timely remedy be not provided, this act will very soon terminate in the overthrow of the Church of Scotland; and of a faithful Ministry therein: In regard that the power of electing Ministers is thereby principally lodged in the hands of a set of men, who are generally disaffected to the power of godliness,—to the doctrine, discipline, worship and government of this Church; as well as the government of our gracious Sovereign King GEORGE, and the Protestant succession in his family.

All sound Presbyterians, who read the history of our forefathers,—generally approve of the practice of Mr Samuel Rutherford, Mr James Guthrie, and other worthy Ministers of this Church; who protested against the public resolutions,—as a thing inconsistent with our Covenants, and prejudicial to the work of reformation; although thereby the door was only opened to malignants to come into places of civil or military trust: And we who live at this time of day, may see the pernicious effects these resolutions had in the Church of Scotland. But what would our forefathers have thought, or what will succeeding generations think of this act of Assembly; whereby malignants are vested, not with a civil or military, but with an ecclesiastical power,—in the settlement of the generality of Ministers through the Church of Scotland? By which means the Church of Scotland, and her sacred privileges,—are rendered exceeding cheap, even in the eyes of her avowed enemies; this being a compliment they neither expected nor desired at our hands. But, after all, I have good reason to believe,—that this act is far from being the mind of the generality of Presbyteries through this national Church; and therefore I would gladly hope a seasonable stand shall yet be made against it, in order to prevent its pernicious consequences.

My last inference shall be in a word of exhortation. Are Ministers of the Gospel builders of the Church; and is it the great plot of heaven, to have Christ exalted as the Head-stone of the Corner? Then let me call and exhort my Reverend Brethren and Fathers (and I desire to apply the exhortation to myself), to concur with heart and hand in lifting up the chief Corner-stone; and
making his name to be remembered unto all generations, that the people may praise
him for ever and ever. However he has been, or still is rejected by other builders, yet
let us study to exalt him; saying one to another,—*O magnify the Lord with me, let us
exalt his name together.*

I shall not stay, after what has been said, to use many motives. Only in so
many words, let us consider the excellency of his person; and the relation he bears to
us and others of our tribe or family, both by nature and office: He being *Immanuel,
God with us,* ordained the great Prophet, Priest, and King of the Church,—to answer
the maladies and miseries of ignorance, guilt, and bondage we are brought under by
the sin of the first Adam. Let us consider,—*That it is his Father’s will that all men
should honour him as they honour the Father himself: Yea, his Father has highly
exalted him, and given him a name above every name; and hath ordered, that every
tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* Let
us consider, that this is the work of the Holy Ghost: The great scope of all his
dictates in the word, and of all his graces, influences and operations in the heart,—
being to lift up this Corner-stone*. This is the work wherein angels delight to be
employed: With what alacrity do they celebrate his nativity, and tell the tidings of it
unto the shepherds†. This was the work of all the Prophets under the Old Testament;
they all prophesied of him,—testified of his sufferings, and of the glory that should
follow. They were as so many harbingers, sent to prepare the world for the reception
of this glorious Person.—All the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers,
given by him unto the New Testament Church,—have had this as the great scope of
their ministry; to edify the body of Christ, by lifting up the glory of this Head-stone
of the Corner‡. In short, this is and has been the business of the Church militant here
upon earth; and will be the work of the Church triumphant through eternity. They all
with one voice cry,—*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain; to receive power, and
riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing||.* And is it
not glorious encouragement to us, to lift up the honour of our Redeemer; when we
have such good company to join us in our work?

Again, let us consider that Christ is *the Stone;* without which there can be no
building; for he is the Church’s all; *Christ is all and in all:* He is her light, her life,
her righteousness, her strength, her peace, her food, her clothing, her wisdom, her
holiness. So that if he be wanting, all is wanting; and the Church is ruined. We
cannot answer the commission we bear from our great Master, if we do not exalt the
chief Corner-stone. *It is Christ whom we preach.§* We are to be of Paul’s spirit; *to
know nothing among

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‡ Rev. iv. 10. || Rev. v. 12.
§ Col. i. 27, 28.
our hearers, but Christ and him crucified: We are always to triumph in the revelation of Christ, so as the savour of his knowledge may be made manifest by us in every place. To conclude, we can never finish our course with joy, and the ministry we have received of the Lord; except this be the great scope of our work,—whether in doctrine, discipline, worship or government.

I shall shut up this discourse, with a few Advices; in order to our being successful builders of this glorious fabric, wherein Christ is the Head-Stone of the corner.

1. Let us beware of the fatal errors before-mentioned; whereby the Jewish builders ruined their once glorious fabric, and buried themselves in the ruins thereof. Let us beware of these doctrines vented in our day, which disparage the person of our glorious Redeemer; and derogate from his supreme and independent Deity, or his headship and sovereignty in his Church. Let us beware of nauseating the spirituality of his doctrine, and the sublime mysteries of our holy religion; preferring thereunto the harangues of Moralists. When we preach the law, let us open it in its extent and spirituality; so as to turn in its edge upon the heart and conscience, that it may be a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Let us preach up the everlasting righteousness of the Son, as the only ground of a sinner’s justification; and beware of every thing, that has the least tendency to foster a sinner in his hope of salvation by the works of the law. Let us beware of blocking up the door of access to Christ, by legal qualifications; which are no where to be had, but in Christ himself. Let us beware of formality, either in preaching or praying; whereby we may deaden the ordinances of God to our own souls, or the souls of our hearers: And, in order thereto, let us take care to license or lay hands upon none,—but such as, in the judgment of charity, we have reason to think are acquainted with the power of godliness; even though they have been trained up in literature, at the foot of a professor of divinity. Let us beware of carnal policy, in the matters of Christ’s kingdom and glory. Let us study impartially the exercise of discipline, and beware of turning the edge of it against them that deserve it least. And let us set ourselves to stop these passages in to the house of God, by which thieves and robbers most ordinarily enter, that the house of God be not turned into a den of thieves.

2. In order to our being successful builders, let us seek the builder’s word from the great Master-builder: For there is a word which Christ gives his faithful Ministers, whereby the art of building is much conveyed. I have given them thy word*. Without this word from the mouth of Christ, we will never know the true art of build-

*John xvii. 14.
ing the Church: By this word, the man of God is made a perfect builder, thoroughly furnished unto every good work. And if you ask me, what is that word? I answer, it is an experimental acquaintance with the power of the word upon the soul: particularly the knowledge of that leading mystery, *God manifested in the flesh*.

3. Let us take care, that every stone of the building correspond with the foundation and Corner-Stone: Whatever doctrines or practices do not hang right with this regulating Stone, let them be cast. In order to which,—let us examine our own and others doctrines and conversation, by the plumb-line and infallible rule of the word*.

4. Let us observe the signs of the times; and whenever we discern the danger a-coming, either from open enemies or pretended friends, [or our fellow builders going wrong; let us give the cry, like faithful watchmen: And though they be offended, there is no help for that. It is a heavy charge that is laid by God against some as above,—that they were *dumb dogs* that *could not bark*]; but preferred their own carnal case, unto the safety of the Church†.

5. Let us wrestle much at a throne of grace, for the countenance of the great Master; and assistance of his Spirit: for *except the Lord build the house, the builders build in vain*;—Paul may plant, and Apollos water; but it is God who giveth the increase.

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Upon the delivery of the foregoing Sermon, the Synod appointed a committee to draw up Remarks upon it: And they spent much of three days, in warm reasonings concerning it; particularly as to the passages referred to in the Committee’s report, which are printed here in a larger character. Upon the whole,—the Synod having appointed (October 12th, 1732) that Mr *Erskine* should be *rebuked* and *admonished* at their bar, for these passages of his Sermon; but finding that he was not in the house: They “resolved, if he be in the house to-morrow, to call him up to be rebuked; and if he should not be present to-morrow, they resolved to call him up at their meeting in April next—to rebuke and admonish him in terms of the sentence.”

At their meeting in *Stirling*, on the 12th of *April 1733,—“Mr *Erskine* being called and compearing, and the Synod going to execute their sentence in the terms of their appointment;” he offered to deliver his mind as to the affair of the censure upon his sermon, which was then before them,—but was not allowed: Whereupon he adhered to his appeal, and withdrew. But being called back, he was told by the Moderator that he was allowed to speak;

*Isa. viii. 2.  †Isa. lvi. 10, 11, 12.
speak; and thereupon he read a paper (immediately withdrawing when he had done so), the tenor whereof follows, viz.

“According to the utterance given by the Lord to me at Perth, I delivered his mind; particularly with relation to some prevailing evils of the day, which to me are matter of confession: And therefore I dare not retract the least part of that Testimony. I am heartily sorry, that ever the Reverend Synod should have commenced a process against me, for what I am persuaded was nothing else but truth; especially when they have never yet made it appear, that I have in the least receded from the word of God,—and our approven Standards of doctrine, worship, discipline and government. Every man has his own proper gift of utterance; and according to the gift bestowed on me, so I expressed myself at Perth; and if I had given offence by any expressions uttered by me at that time, I should very willingly retract and beg pardon: But I hope my Reverend Brethren will excuse me to say, That I am not yet convinced of any just ground given for a Rebuke and Admonition.”

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.
A P P E N D I X II.

A SERMON preached at the opening of the Synod of Perth and Stirling,—at Perth, October 10th 1732; by the Reverend Mr EBENEZER ERSkINE Minister of the Gospel at Stirling*:

ON

Psalm cxviii. 22.

The Stone which the Builders rejected, the same is made the Head-stone of the Corner.

It is probable this Psalm was penned by David; when the Ark of God was brought up from the house of Obed-Edom, to its proper place in Jerusalem: After the intestine broils between the houses of David and Saul had happily issued,—in David’s promotion, by the common consent of all the tribes, to the crown and kingdom of Israel. But though this was the occasion, yet the Spirit of God had in it a further view; namely, to Christ himself,—of whom David, and his administrations in Israel, were but a faint type and shadow.

David’s accession to the throne was through many storms of opposition. Although God had chosen and ordained him for the kingdom and government, he was opposed by the house of Saul,—and them who adhered to that family; yet after all, the house of David prevailed. Just so was it with the Son of David, our glorious Redeemer. Hell and earth combined against the Lord and his Messiah; but God had determined that the government should be upon his shoulder, that his King should be set upon his holy Hill of Zion: And he carries his design against all opposers, as you see in my text; The stone which the builders rejected, the same is made the head-stone of the corner.

I need not stay to prove, that these words are to be understood of Christ; after the express application that is made of them to him

*This Sermon (referred to p. 26) was published under the following Title; The STONE rejected by the Builders, exalted as the Head-stone of the corner. And it is here added, as containing the ground of that process which issued in the Secession.

In this edition, the scriptures quoted are mostly not extended: but referred to, at the foot of the page. The quarrelled passages are printed in a larger character.
him by himself and his apostles, in the scriptures of the New-Testament. [Matth. xxi. 42. Acts iv. 11. 1 Pet. ii. 7. Eph. ii. 20.].

In the words we may notice the following particulars. 1. The metaphorical view in which the Church is here represented; namely, that of a house or building. 2. The character that our Immanuel bears with respect to this building; he is the Stone, in a way of eminence,—without whom there can be no building, no house for God to dwell in among the children of men. 3. The character of the workmen employed in this spiritual structure; they are called builders. 4. A fatal error they are charged with, in building the house of God; they refuse the Stone of God’s choosing, they do not allow him a place in his own house. 5. Notice the place that Christ should and shall have in this building, let the builders do their worst; he is made the Head-stone of the corner. The words immediately following declare how this is effected; and how the saints are affected with the views of his exaltation, notwithstanding the malice of hell and earth: This is the Lord’s doing, and it is wonderful in our eyes.

In discoursing of this subject, I shall just follow the order of the text now laid down; by explaining the particulars named: And then deduce a few inferences from the whole.

FIRST, Let us take a view of the Church under the notion of a house or building. This metaphorical view of the Church is very frequent in the scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament*. Hence Paul, writing to Timothy,—directs him how to behave himself in the Church of God, which is the House of the living God.—

1st, That though God took up house with man at his creation, yet by the fall of Adam the family was skait; God broke up house with man: The family was parted, and the breach was wide like the sea. God could have no fellowship with man; for what fellowship could there be betwixt light and darkness, betwixt God and Belial: And immediately man, like the prodigal, forsook God; and wandered into a far country of sin and vanity.

2dly, God had a stated design from eternity,—that notwithstanding of this breach, he would have a house and dwelling with fallen man; he designed to take up house, and gather the family again. Thence we are told,—that before the foundation of the earth, he rejoiced in the habitable part thereof; and his delights were with the sons of men. The foundation of this building was laid in the council of peace, and all the stones and materials of it were sequestrate and set apart: From the ancient years of eternity, Christ was chosen as the Foundation and chief Corner-stone; I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning; ere ever the earth was. And all the saints were elected as living stones; to be renewed, justified, adopted, sanctified, and eternally saved in him and through him†.

3dly,

* Isa. ii. 2, 3. 1 Cor. iii. 9. †Eph. ii. 4, 5.
3dly, Before this designed building could go up, heaven must be at an infinite expense. Before one stone could be laid in the building, the glory of the infinite God must be vailed with a vail of flesh in the person of the eternal Son; the great Lawgiver must be made under his own law, God blessed for ever must be made a curse, and the Holy One of God made Sin. Justice had determined,—that without shedding of blood, there should be no remission of sin: And except justice was satisfied, and the honour of the law repaired; God could never dwell upon honourable terms with man upon earth. Oh, the expense that God is at in building this house! We must be redeemed from the hand of justice,—not with silver and gold, or such corruptible things; but with the precious blood of Christ.

4thly, Every stone of this building is digged out of the deep and dark quarry of nature; being dead in trespasses and sins, children of wrath even as others, alienated from the life of God through ignorance, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise. In a word,—there is not worse stuff in hell itself, than the stones of this building are by nature. And who can quarrel with the great Builder,—for taking one stone out of the quarry, and leaving another behind him as he has a mind: Only when we look to the rock whence we were hewn, and the pit whence we were digged; we may say, Who made us to differ? for a Syrian ready to perish was our father.

5thly, The great engine the glorious Builder makes use of, for gathering the stones of the building, and carrying on the edifice,—is the pure preaching of the everlasting gospel. This is what the Prophet foretells*. It pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. It is the gospel that is the power of God unto salvation; for therein is the righteousness of God revealed, from faith to faith†. When Christ sent forth his Apostles and Ministers, as founders of the New-Testament Church; what were they to do? Their commission was to go into all the world, and to preach the gospel to every creature under heaven: Go teach all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Hence the Apostle declares: The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God; and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ‡.

6thly, The Church thus gathered and united under Christ, as a glorious Head,—is the House of God, or his family upon earth. He has a manifold right unto her: A right by election, a right by redemption and purchase; a right by Covenant, and by possession. And if it is asked, what kind of a house is the Church of God? I answer,

1. It is his dwelling-house: In Salem is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place is in Zion||. God has no other rest amongst the

children

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*Isa. xxvii. 13. †Rom. i. 16, 17. ‡2 Cor. x. 4, 5. ||Psal. lxxvi. 2.
children of men, than his Church. The Lord hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his habitation; this is my rest, here will I dwell. So that the tabernacle of God is with men. And as a man takes pleasure in his house or lodging, so doth God take pleasure in his Church. The Lord taketh pleasure in his people, he will beautify the meek with salvation. I will dwell in them, and walk in them: and will be a father unto them; and they shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

2. The Church is his treasure-house. Here it is that he disposes of his most valuable furniture he hath in the world. Israel is his peculiar treasure; the Lord’s portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. Here he hath his crown and diadem: Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Here he hath his jewels as his people are called*; in comparison of whom, all the rest of the world are but trash. What is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord†? Before he lose his jewels and his portion, he will sacrifice nations and kingdoms for their safety‡.

3. The Church is his banqueting-house‡; Here it is he makes unto all people (in the external dispensation of the gospel) a feast of fat things; of vines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, wines on the less well refined: And here it is that the souls of believers are entertained with meat and drink indeed; the hidden manna, and the fruits of the tree of life: And here it is that he himself is entertained with the graces of his own spirit||. —Thus, I say, the Church is the house of the living God.

7thly, As the Church is the house of God, or his family; so Christ is the only door of the house§. No man can be reckoned a member of the Church, far less a Minister,—no, not in the judgment of charity; except he make a credible profession of his faith in Christ, and have a corresponding walk and conversation: And he that comes into the house of God, and lays claim to the privileges of the Church without it; the Master of the house in his own time will say to him,—Friend, how camest thou in hither? And they who adventure to confer the privileges of the Church upon those who have not come in by the door Christ; and who, in the view of the world, are of a malignant spirit,—enemies to the house of our God: These, I say, are guilty of casting that which is holy unto dogs, and of betraying the house of God, instead of ruling it to advantage.

8thly, Although this house or building be the object of the malice of hell and earth,—yet, as it has stood since its erection in Paradise; so it shall stand, while sun and moon endure in the firmament. Indeed particular Churches may be razed, but the Catholic universal Church shall stand the utmost efforts of the gates of hell. The Lord is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early: Hence is that song,—We will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be car-

*Mal. iii. 17. ||Cant. v. 1.
†Isa. xliii. 3, 4. §John x. 1, 9.
‡Cant. ii. 4.
ried into the midst of the sea*. And all the storms that have blown upon her, from hell and earth,—have only served, by over-ruling Providence, to advance her true interest and glory†.

The SECOND thing proposed was—speak a little of the character here given unto Christ, with relation to this building; he is the Stone. There are a great many stones in a building; but in this spiritual building of the House of God, Christ is the Stone, in a way of eminence and excellence: As if the whole building were of one piece; intimating that Christ and his Church are so closely united, as to become one body and one spirit. Upon this account the whole building is called by the name of Christ, as the principal part thereof‡. I conceive that Christ is called the Stone here, for the same reason that he elsewhere calls himself a Rock; upon this Rock I will build my Church: To intimate that he is the strength and stability of his Church. Now the excellency and necessity of this Stone, to the rearing and building of the House of God,—will appear if we consider,

1. That he is the Stone of God’s choosing: Chosen of God and precious||; fore-ordained before the foundation of the world.
2. He is the Stone of God’s approbation. Though he be disallowed of men, he had his Father’s testimony from heaven with an audible voice; this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And as he is approved of God, so he is approven of by every wise builder: They will be ready to say with Paul,—This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation; that Christ came into the world to save sinners.
3. He is the Stone of God’s trying§. He was tried in the furnace of his Father’s wrath, and he abode the trial; for he came forth more glorious than ever, in his resurrection from the dead. He stood the trial of the rage of men and devils, who endeavoured to stop him in his redeeming work. All the saints in heaven, and all believers on earth, have tried him; and will give him this testimony, that he is able to save to the uttermost.
4. He is the only living and life-giving Stone¶. As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. He is the resurrection and the life, and all the stones of the building derive their life from him.
5. He is the Stone that is laid by the hand of Jehovah, as a foundation in Zion**. He was laid decretively from eternity; he is laid doctrinally and declaratively in a preached gospel: And he is laid efficaciously in a day of power; when the sinner is, by the power of the eternal Spirit, determined to take hold of him by faith. He is laid as a foundation, and the only foundation of hope and help for perishing sinners. Men have been trying

*Psal. xlvi. 2, 5. † Isa. liv. 11, 12.
‡ 1 Cor. xii. 12. || 1 Pet. ii. 4. Isa. xlii. 1.
§ Isa. xxviii. 16. ¶ 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5. 1 John v. 12. Col. iii. 3.
**Isa. xxviii. 16.
in all ages to lay other foundations, but still they have proven foundations of sand; another foundation can no man lay than that is laid, Christ Jesus. They who attempt to rear a church without Christ, or to build up to themselves a hope of salvation without him,—have only built castles in the air; and their building always turned to nought.

6. He is the matchless and incomparable Stone: For he is the Head-stone of the Corner: The brightness of his Father’s glory is in him, and the express image of his person. All created glory shrinks into nothing and darkness, when he appears; for he is fairer than the children of men, as the apple-tree among the trees of the wood: And he casts a lustre and glory on the whole building, and every stone in it; for we are beautiful through his comeliness, the beauty of the Lord is upon his saints.

The THIRD thing to be discoursed a little, was of the workmen employed in this spiritual building or fabric of the Church; here called Builders. Christ himself is the principal builder, to whom the work is committed*: But he employs officers under him, for the on-carrying of the work; and these are called builders. Kings, and those in civil authority,—when, in their sphere, they lend their helping hand to advance and carry on the work of God; may be called builders of the Church: But under the New Testament, I find this term only applied to Ministers of the Gospel; ordinary or extraordinary. He gave some apostles and prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers†. For what end? It is for the edifying of the Church, or building the body of Christ. And Paul declareth‡,—that according to the grace given him, he, as a wise master-builder, had laid the foundation. So that Ministers of the gospel are especially the New Testament builders.—Now, with relation to them, there are only these few things I suggest.

1. It is a very honourable employment to be a builder of the House of God: It is an employment wherein the Son of God as Mediator is engaged; and is it not an honour, to be co-workers with him? David esteemed it an honour, to be a doorkeeper in the House of our God; but it is yet more so, to be a builder of the House. And as the work is honourable, so the reward of grace is proportioned; for if we keep the charge committed to us in building the House of God, we shall have place among them that stand by the heavenly throne: And they that be wise, shall shine like the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.

2. None can warrantably lay a stone in this building, except he be regularly called. What mason will put his hand to a building, unless he be employed by these that have warrant to call him:

*Zech. vii. 12, 13. †Eph. iv. 11, 12. ‡1 Cor. iii. 10.
This is a thing so necessary, that Christ himself would not meddle in building his Father’s House till he had his Father’s call*. There is a twofold call necessary, for a man’s meddling as a builder in the Church of God; there is the call of God, and of his Church. God’s call consists, in his qualifying a man for the work; and inspiring him with a holy zeal and desire, to employ these qualifications for the glory of God and the good of his Church. [The call of the Church lies in the free choice and election of the Christian people. The promise of conduct and counsel, in the choice of men that are to build,—is not made to patrons, hereters, or any other set of men; but to the Church, the body of Christ,—to whom apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are given. As it is a natural privilege of every house or society of men, to have the choice of their own servants or officers; so it is the privilege of the House of God in a particular manner. What a miserable bondage would it be reckoned, for any family to have stewards or servants imposed on them by strangers; who might give the children a stone for bread, or a scorpion instead of a fish, poison instead of medicine? And shall we suppose, that ever God granted a power to any set of men,—patrons, hereters, or whatever they be,—a power to impose servants on his family, without their consent; they being the freest society in the world?] But I pass this at present; perhaps more of it may occur afterwards.

3. The builders of the House of God, are not left to form or mould the house according to their own fancy; no, but they must follow the pattern shewed in the holy Mount of divine Revelation.

When the Tabernacle was reared, a plat-form of it was given to Moses. When the Temple was to be built, a pattern of it was given to Solomon by his father. And every pin of the Tabernacle and every stone of the Temple, was to be regulated and disposed according to the divine order. Now these were but types of the New-Testament building, whereof we now speak. Who builds a house, without forming a plan of it to the builder? Who erects a society, without giving orders about its government! They who assert the government of the Church to be ambulatory, cast a reflection on the wisdom of God,—which is not to be supposed of any wise man whatever. Now, I say, as builders of a house must renounce their own schemes, and follow the order of the owner; so Ministers and Church-officers, in building the House of God, must renounce carnal policy and the wisdom of the world; and

*Heb. v. 4, 5.
follow the orders given by God in his word, the perfect rule of faith and manners both
to Ministers and Church members. What the particular model of the Church should
be, is a thing, I hope, beyond controversy amongst us; who are solemnly engaged to
maintain the doctrine, discipline, worship, and government of this Church: And
therefore I do not enter upon it now.

4. God has endowed men whom he calls to build his House, with different
talents and abilities; according to the different services they are to be employed about
in the work. There are a great variety of gifts bestowed by Christ upon his Ministers,
all calculated for the good of the Church of God in general: The Apostle illustrates
this argument at great length, (1 Cor. xii), through the whole of the chapter. If this
were but duly considered, it would cure all manner of strife and emulation among the
builders; that they should not grudge one against another.

5. The gifts of men, however edifying or well adapted for carrying on the
work, will never do service without the blessing and countenance of the great Master
Builder. Paul may plant, and Apollos water; but God giveth the increase. And it is
well, that it is so ordered of infinite wisdom; that men may not give greater glory to
instruments than is due, and that the whole glory may redound to the Lord: For this
end, he puts the treasure in earthen vessels,—that the excellency of the power may be
of him.

6. The work of God is many times exceedingly marred, through the weakness
or wickedness of pretended builders. But this leads me to the

FOURTH thing proposed; which was to speak of the fatal error of these
builders spoken of in my text: They reject the Stone, without which their whole
building was nothing but a medley of confusion: however glorious it might appear in
their own eyes, The Stone is rejected by the builders.

They seemed to have a great zeal for the Messiah and his kingdom; yet when
he comes, they do not allow him a room in his own House. He came unto his own,
and his own received him not: And so they fulfilled Isaiah’s prediction of him*. And
because they rejected him, he hath rejected them as a Church and nation: And, Oh!
how happy had it been,—if their error and ruin thereupon had served as a beacon to
other Churches since their day, not to dash upon the same rock. But here a question
naturally arises,—How did the Jewish builders reject the Stone which God had
ordained to be the chief Stone of the Corner? Answer, This came about through a
great many corruptions which they introduced, both in principle and in practice. I
shall only name a few of them; [and leave it to every one to judge, how far such evils
or corruptions are to be found in our own day.]

1. Though they pretended a great regard unto the holy law of God, and cried
out upon Christ and his Apostles as enemies to it;

yet

*Isa. liii. 2, 3.
yet they narrowed and contracted the sense and meaning of it, confining it merely to
the letter,—without searching into its extent and spirituality; which gave occasion
unto Christ’s Sermon on the Mount. By these means, though their hearers might have
some notions of moral honesty; yet could they have no notion of the depravation of
nature, and of the deceit and desperate wickedness of their hearts: Without which no
man can ever know the need he has of the work of regeneration, or of a Saviour from
sin.

2. Having pared off the spiritual meaning of the law, they sought justification
by the works thereof; and thought a man’s own personal obedience enough to
recommend him to God*. They could frame no notion to themselves, of justification
by the imputed righteousness of the Messiah: Though God had told them, that their
righteousness and their works could not profit them; that it was a bed too short, and a
covering too narrow for them.

3. These builders, through the legality of their doctrine, shut up the kingdom
of heaven against men; they would neither enter themselves, nor suffer others that
were entering to enter. God had told them, that the blessings of his Covenant must be
had without money or price; but they would needs palm their legal qualifications
upon God, and barter the matter with him: And thus instead of casting out the stones,
or preparing the way of the people†; they threw stones and stumbling-blocks in the
way of the salvation of sinners by the Messiah.

4. These builders deadened the ordinances of God, by their formality. Though
they retained the shell of ordinances, they never regarded the end,—either with
respect to their own souls, or the souls of their people; which was fellowship and
communion with God therein; for which reason, God declareth his abhorrence of his
own institutions‡. One of the great sources of this evil was,—that if a man had been
trained up at the feet of Gamaliel for a few years, and got a smack of the learning then
in vogue; it was enough in their opinion to qualify him for being a builder in the
House of God, though in the mean time he was an utter stranger to the work of grace
on his soul: As is evident from the instance of Nicodemus; who, when Christ tries
him upon the head of regeneration, he babbles and speaks nonsense, (John iii. 4.)
How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his
mother’s womb and be born. Hence is that sharp challenge, (ver. 10) Art thou a
master of Israel, and knowest not these things? There Christ speaks of it as a thing
criminal,—that men should be made teachers of the Church, who were strangers to a
work of grace; for what but dead formal worship could be performed, by men dead in
trespasses and sins.

5. They were continually dabbling in politics, gave themselves up to the
conduct of carnal wisdom and policy in the matters of

\[\text{God} \]

*Rom. ix. 31, 32. x. 3. *
†Isa. lxii. 10.
‡Isa. i. 11,12, etc.
God and of his Church; and through this carnal wisdom, they were led on to crucify the Lord of glory*. When once a Church comes to stand upon the rotten prop of carnal wisdom and policy, she is near unto ruin. It is true, ministers are to be wise as serpents; but the wisdom of the serpent will soon lead us off our feet into pernicious courses, if not attended with the simplicity of the dove: And therefore we need, that in simplicity and godly sincerity,—not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God,—we should have our conversation in this world.

6. [The Jewish builders valued themselves exceedingly upon their connection with the rulers and great folk in that day; and having joined interest with them, treated the common people, especially those who owned Christ and attended his ministry, and that of his apostles,—as an un-hallowed mob; as is clear from (John vii. 45, etc); where they having sent some of their officers to apprehend Christ, the officers return, declaring,—that never man spake like this man: To which the Pharisees reply, Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people, who know not the law, are accursed. As if the common people had been obliged to follow them, and the rulers with whom they connected themselves, by an implicit faith and obedience; without ever bringing their doctrine and actings to the bar of the law and testimony, to be tried there].

7. They and the rulers having got the ascendant in the Sanhedrin, and other courts; they took care to keep the power upon their side, by bringing in none but men of their own stamp and spirit: And if any man adventure to open his mouth, or testify against their corruptions in principle or practice,—presently combinations are formed, plots are laid; and the edge of the Church’s discipline, which they had grasped, is turned against him as a turbulent person, an enemy to the law and temple;—as is clear from their management with Christ, his apostles, and the protomartyr Stephen. But yet notwithstanding of their pretended regard to the temple, they admitted the buyers and sellers to enter into it; whereby they turned that holy place into a den of thieves, as Christ tells them to their face†. And whatever regard they pretended to the law, by a shew of sanctity before the world; yet they abandoned themselves to all manner of secret and heart wickedness: Hence our Lord compares them unto painted sepulchres; glorious without, but within full of dead men’s bones and rottenness‡.

Again,

*John xi. 47, etc.
†John ii. 16. Matth. xxi. 13.
‡Matth. xxiii. 27.
Again, however careful they were to cloak and palliate their secret wickedness, yet now and then it was breaking out; to the great scandal and offence of the poor people of God: By which means they made themselves contemptible, and caused many to stumble at the law,—and abhor the sacrifices of the Lord, as administrate by them.*

Having lost the hearts of the people by these means, they gave themselves up to all manner of sloth and indolence; taking care to feed their own bellies, and enrich themselves with the good of this world; while, in the mean time, they entirely neglected the flock and heritage of God. Hence is that charge against them by the prophet Isaiah†.

Those Jewish rulers ruled the Lord’s people with rigour, invaded their freedoms and liberties, bound heavy burdens on them which they themselves would not touch with one of their fingers; and by this means the Lord’s people were scattered from the worship of God in their synagogues, as sheep having no shepherd. Hence is that plain dealing by the prophet Ezekiel‡.

In short, to such a degree of corruption were they arrived; that the holy and profane, the clean and unclean, were alike to them,—providing they were of their way and party||.

Thus the Jewish Church, and particularly her pretended builders, we see were sunk into the very dregs of corruption. And hence it came, that when the glorious and long looked for Messiah actually appeared among them, upon the stage of this world; instead of giving him a reception suitable to his excellency, as Immanuel God-Man, they treated him with the utmost contempt. Though he opened his commission,—and made it evident to the world by his doctrine, miracles, and the whole of his conversation, that he was none other than the brightness of his Father’s glory; yet they disparaged his person, denied his supreme Deity, esteeming him only as the son of the carpenter: Contradicted his doctrine; and studied to obscure his miracles, by ascribing them to the power of Beelzebub the prince of devils. They blackened his character with reproaches,—as though he had been a glutton, a wine biber, a friend of publicans and sinners; and at length crucified him ignominiously, as though he had been a notorious impostor, betwixt two thieves. And when after his resurrection from the dead, he came to them in the ministry of his apostles,—bringing his righteousness and salvation near unto them, they finally rejected him and all the offers of his grace: For which reason, God was provoked, by a heavy sentence of excommunication, to cut them off from being a Church or nation,—under which they are lying to this day; his blood being upon them and upon their children, according to their wish at his crucifixion. And thus we see,

*Mal. ii. 8, 9. 
†Isa. lvi. 10, 11. 
‡Ezek. xxxiv. 2—6. 
||Ezek. xxii. 25, 26.
how the Stone of God’s chusing was rejected by the builders. Let their example and ruin serve as so many beacons; that we of the Gentile Churches may not dash ourselves upon the same Church-ruining and soul-destroying rocks: Which is the very use the Apostle Paul makes of this subject, when writing to the Romans*. Which melancholy event actually happened unto the Church of Christ at Rome, as we see at this very day; it being now the seat of Antichrist, and a synagogue of Satan.

The only thing that remains upon this head, is to answer the following question, viz. Whence was it that the Jewish builders rejected Christ, the stone of God’s chusing, trying and laying?

(1.) This fatal error of theirs proceeded from their ignorance of Christ, in the excellency of his person; and of the glorious mystery of redemption and salvation through him†. They were men of no despicable parts, capable enough to toss an argument, they thought themselves the only seers in Israel in their day: Are we blind also? Yet Christ declares them blind like moles, in things relating to his kingdom. The least of Christ’s babes, whom they reckoned among the accursed mob,—had more of the saving knowledge of God, and of the things of God, than they; and the blind leading the blind, both stumbled on the stumbling-stone,—and fell into the ditch together.

(2.) Mistaken notions of the nature of the Messiah’s kingdom, was another cause of their rejecting this precious Stone. They had formed a notion to themselves, without any real ground from scripture prophecy,—that the Messiah was to appear in the form of an earthly monarch; and that he was to lift up the head of the Jewish nation, and make the Romans and all the nations of the world their vassals and tributaries. But finding themselves mistaken, they disown and crucify him as an impostor. Which, by the bye, serves to discover what a dangerous thing it is,—not to have right conceptions of the spiritual nature of Christ’s kingdom. [I am persuaded, that carnal notions of the kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world,—lie at the bottom of many of the evils and corruptions in the day we live in.]

The FIFTH thing in the method was, to enquire what may be implied in Christ’s being made the Head-stone of the corner; notwithstanding of the attempts of the builders to justle him out of his place?

1. It implies Christ’s exaltation and victory over all his enemies and opposers; he will have the better of them, let them do their worst. However Christ and his cause, interest and people, may be born down for a while; yet the scales will turn, and like the house of David they shall prevail. Christ was personally oppressed and afflicted; he drank of the brook in the way. Yet at length he lifted up the head; and God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name

*Rom. xi. 20, 21, 22. †Acts iii. 17. 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8.
name above every name. And as it was with Christ personal, so will it be with his injured members. However they be afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted; yet God will lay their stones with fair colours, and their foundations with sapphires. Though Zion may be laid in ashes, yet she shall be built up again by the Mighty LORD: And when the Lord brings her forth to the light,—then shame shall cover her who said, Where is the LORD thy God?

2. It implies, that God has a great regard for the glory of his Son, as the Head and King of his Church; and that it is his will that all men should honour him, as they honour the Father. This was intimated by a royal mandate, issued forth from the excellent glory: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. God does not reckon it any injury done to him as God Creator, that we worship and serve him in the person of the Redeemer; for his name is in him: His glory, majesty, and other excellent perfections, are in him as they are in the Father; and therefore it is his will,—That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

3. It implies, that the whole spiritual fabric or building of the Church hangs upon him; as the superstructure leans upon the foundation and chief corner stone. He shall build the temple, and bear the glory; says the prophet Zechariah: And Isaiah (xxii. 24.), They shall hang upon him all the glory of his Father's house. All the doctrines of the Church, and truths of the everlasting gospel, lean upon him. He is the Alpha and Omega. Hence we read of the truth as it is in Jesus: They meet in him, as the spokes of a wheel in the nave. All the promises meet in him, they are in him yea and amen. All the precepts lean upon his authority, for the law is the law of Christ; it is his yoke and burden. The whole discipline of the Church hangs upon him. The keys of doctrine and discipline hang at his girdle. The government of the Church pertains to him; for it is laid upon his shoulder. The ordinances and worship of the Church hang on him; no sort of worship, or a part of worship can be admitted, but what bears the impression of his institution. The officers of the Church hang upon him, for their commission and success in their work; in a word, all the members of the Church hang upon him. The whole offspring and issue, the vessels of small quantity, from vessels of cups to vessels of flagons,—hang on him; as a nail in a sure place.

4. His being made the Head-stone of the corner implies, that he is the alone center of unity in the Church: for the head-stone of the corner knits the whole building together; and if that be removed, the walls of the house fall asunder,—and so the whole fabric is ruined. If we do not hold the Head-stone of the corner, by which the whole building is supplied and knit together; the fabric of a Church, however politically framed, can never stand long.

And
And the reason why the house is tottering at this day, is because there is too much of a receding from the Corner-stone. Usually indeed in a time of defection, the pulpits of these builders whose hands are deepest in it,—ring with the doctrine of peace; and if a tongue be moved against the corrupt measures they are going into, the cry is raised,—*These that turn the world upside down, are come hither also:* While in the mean time, it is such as depart from the Corner-stone that ruin and tear the building; and not they who give warning to the house or family, of its being in danger of falling. They who do give warning may lay their account to be beaten by their fellow builders, that are losing the Corner-stone. But this needs be no surprise, for in all ages Christ’s witnesses have tormented them that dwell upon the earth: And it needs be no discouragement; for though they may be killed and buried, yet there will be a resurrection both of names and persons.

5. His being the Head-stone of the corner implies, that Christ is the beauty and ornament of his Church: For much of the beauty and ornament of the building lies in the corner-stone. We are told,—*The daughters of Zion were like corner-stones polished after the similitude of a palace.* Christ is the glory of his people Israel; and no wonder, for he is the brightness of his Father’s glory. When he is in the midst of his Church, countenancing his ordinances and judicatories; then it is,—*she looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.* But when he departs, all the glory departs; and a dismal Ichabod succeeds: *Yea, woe also unto them when I depart from them:* As may be seen at this day, in the once famous Churches of Lesser Asia; and other places where Christ had once flourishing Churches. They departed from the chief Corner-stone in doctrine, discipline, worship, and government; and this provoked him to depart: And, upon his departure, the songs of their temples were turned into howlings.

6. It implies, that they who would build the Church of Christ must still have him in their eye; and that the whole of their conduct and administration in the house of God, must be regulated with a view to his glory and honour. If, in building a house, the chief corner-stone be not kept in view,—irregular work cannot miss to ensue: Just so is it in the case in hand; if we shall pretend to build the house of God, and do not keep our eyes on Christ and his honour and interest, whether in matters of discipline or doctrine,—instead of building the Church, we do but disorder and disturb it, and throw all into confusion. When we begin to work by carnal policy,—or to have a squint eye upon serving the lusts and humours of men, great or small; or our own worldly interests, and not the glory of our Great Redeemer: We but ruin and pull down the Church of Christ, instead of building it; and are fair to bury our name, our ministry, and our own souls, and the souls of multitudes,—in the rubbish of it. Therefore there is much need of disinterested views, in the management of the affairs of Christ. We that are Ministers, as well as others, had much need
to learn the lesson of self-denial: To deny our own wisdom, and our worldly interests,—as a trifle in respect of his glory, and the advancement of his kingdom.

7. The text implies, that God and corrupt builders are driving quite different measures and designs. The builders reject the Stone, but God will have it to be the Head-stone of the Corner; and which of the parties shall prevail, it is easy to judge. Christ shall sit at his Father’s right hand, till all his enemies be made his footstool. He will break them that rise up against him, as a potter’s vessel: I have set my King, says the Lord, upon my holy Hill of Zion; and who is he that will dethrone him?

What was last proposed in the method, was the APPLICATION of the whole. All the use I shall make of what has been said, shall be wrapt up in the following Inferences.

1st, From what has been said, we may see the excellency of the Church of Christ: She is a building, an house for God to dwell in among the children of men. So valuable is this building, that this whole visible creation is only as a theatre or scaffold for rearing the house; and whenever the building is completed, the scaffold will be taken down and committed to the flames. To discover the high estimate God puts upon his Church, he calls her by the most endearing names and epithets. He designs her his spouse, his love, his dove, his undefiled, his treasure, his portion, his Hephzibah and Beulah, his bed; his resting-place, his walking-place, and his dwelling-place. A whole Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,—lay themselves out in their particular economy, for the up-building of this house: The grace of the Father, the love and blood of the Son, and all the gracious influences and operations of the Holy Ghost,—are laid out for carrying on the work. The whole administrations of providence, in the government of the world,—are adjusted for the benefit of the Church, and the faithful members thereof. For this end the reins of administration, the keys of hell and death,—were committed into the hands of Christ; for God hath given him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body. The Father hath put all things into the hand of the Son; that so all the wheels of providence might be rolled and turned about for the good of them that love him, and who are the called according to his purpose. The whole institution and administration of gospel ordinances, and all the officers of his ordination, whether ordinary or extraordinary,—are designed for her edification*. This may let us see what a valuable trust we have among our hands, to whom God has committed the affairs of the Church; and how tenderly it concerns us to manage them, even like those who are to make an account to the great Lord of the house.

2dly, Is Christ the Stone in a way of eminence? Then we may see how necessary and useful it is to preach Christ. He is the Stone by way of eminence; the Stone of God’s laying, of his chusing, and

*Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13.
396 Mr Erskine's Synod-Sermon. Appendix II.

and the Stone which God will have for the Head-stone of the Corner, Paul, as a wise master-builder, laid this foundation among his hearers; and declares that another foundation can no man lay. It is Christ whom we preach: I, says he, determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. The whole of the scripture revelation meets in him as its centre: All the histories, prophecies, promises, types, precepts, doctrines, and ordinances of the word,—they are just full of Christ. The whole Bible, what is it, but the Testament of Christ; and the testimonial that Christ brought from heaven? These are they which testify of me. These things are written, that ye may believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in him. And to be sure, what is the scope of the whole revelation of the mind of God in the word,—ought to be the scope and design of all our sermons. Whatever particular doctrines we insist upon, ought still to be grafted upon the blessed branch that springs out of the root of Jesse; for the truth is only right dispensed, and right known, as it is in Jesus.

Hence the great Mr Durham tells us (in his first sermon on Isa. liii.), “That Christ stands under a fourfold relation to preaching: 1. He is the Text of all; all preaching is to explain him,—and that preaching that does not stand in relation to him, is a preaching beside the text. 2. He is the ground work and foundation of preaching; so that preaching without him wants a foundation, and is but building castles in the air. 3. He is the great end of preaching; namely, to set him on high in the hearts and affections of our hearers: The design of preaching is not to make ourselves but our Master, great; to cause his name to be remembered. 4. He is the very power and life of preaching, for he is the power of God and the wisdom of God:

And the gospel is called the power of God unto salvation; for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.”—Thus far that great man.

3dly, If the Ministers of the Gospel be builders of the house; then see hence the need of trying a man’s acquaintance with Christ, and the power of religion,—before he is admitted into ministerial communion, as a fellow builder in the house of God. Why; that man who is not really acquainted with Christ in an experimental way, may be fair to reject the stone of God’s choosing; and to ruin the building, and bury himself and many souls in the ruins of it. Masons know one another; they have certain signs and words, by which, they are capable to distinguish men of their own art and business from others: So, skilful builders in the house of God are capable, by a spiritual discerning,—to know who are fit for being admitted to the work of the Lord, and who not. If such a discerning be given even unto Church members, as to try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world*: Much more may it be supposed, that this discern-

*1 John iv. 1.
ing faculty is to be found among faithful Ministers of the Gospel. Hence is that of the Apostle to Timothy,—*The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men; who shall be able to teach others also*.

4thly, Is it so, that the Stone is rejected by the builders? Then see hence what a fatal and pernicious thing,—a corrupt, erroneous and ignorant ministry is to the Church of Christ. Why; they spoil, mar and destroy the whole building: They run counter to the great plot of heaven; by casting away the Stone, which God has ordained to be the chief Stone of the Corner. The new mode of preaching some men have fallen into, with their harangues and flourishes of morality,—while Christ is scarce named, from the beginning to the end of their discourse; I look on as a plot of hell to throw out the Corner-stone, in order to bring us back into heathenish or antichristian darkness. Christ is the light of the world; and if he be removed, or shuffled out, where are we,—but just in the dark places of the earth, which are full of the habitations of cruelty? So that, I say, a corrupt ministry, whatever be their fine parts,—are the very bane of the Church of Christ.

5thly, If it be God’s great design, that Christ should be the chief Stone of the Corner; if this, I say, be the resolution of Heaven: Then see hence, that all the attempts of hell for the depressing of Christ, and the ruin of his cause,—whether by open enemies or pretended builders,—shall be abortive in the issue. For the counsel of the Lord shall stand and he will do all his pleasure; in spite of hell and earth. And what is his pleasure and counsel? Why, here it is: *The Stone which the builders rejected, the same shall become the Head-stone of the Corner.* The gates of hell have made many an attempt, to get the Stone of God’s chusing rejected,—in order to the ruin of the Church; but they have never yet prevailed, and never shall: Infinite Wisdom hath always taken the wise in their own craftiness, and turned the counsel of the froward headlong; and made these very devices of hell and its instruments, subservient to lift the Corner-stone higher in the building,—to the shame and ruin of those who attempted to reject it. This little stone cut out of the mountain, hath always proved too hard for all the metals that clashed with it; and it will be so to the end of time.

6thly, See from what is said, what it is that makes a flourishing Church. It is not her external peace, plenty or prosperity; nor her connection in politics with Kings or Parliaments,—patrons, heritors, or any other set of men: But her connection with the chief Corner-stone. This, and this only, is what beautifies the whole building; and makes her increase with the Increase of God.

7thly, See hence, great ground of lamentation and humiliation at this day. The Stone is rejected, which God would have to be the chief Stone of the Corner. Is he not rejected in his prophetic office; through the prevailing ignorance and unbelief that is to be found among the hearers of the gospel? The old complaint

*2 Tim. ii. 2.*
Mr Erskine’s Synod-Sermon.  Appendix II.

may still be renewed in our day, *Who hath believed our report?* Is he not rejected in his priestly office; while the generality, with the Jews, go about to *establish their own righteousness,*—and refuse the righteousness of God? And is he not rejected in his kingly office and headship in his Church; by the abounding prophaneness, atheism and immorality of our day: By the generality of professed Christians, their breaking his bonds and casting his cords from them? I cannot now stand, to give a full narrative of the injuries which have been done to the royal prerogative of this King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

The Roman Antichrist has for a long time invaded the prerogative of the Son of God, by usurping a headship over the Church; *He sitteth in the Temple of God, and exalteth himself above all that is called God.* At the imperfect Reformation of England, when they threw off the Pope as head of the Church; they lodged the same in the King, declaring him to be the supreme head in all causes civil or ecclesiastic. In the late days of Scotland’s apostasy from God, the crown was sacrilegiously taken from Christ’s head among us also; and set upon the head of a persecuting Apostate. Dreadful were the invasions and encroachments that were made upon the Crown-royal of the King of Zion,—by Kings, Parliaments, and persons of all ranks: Particularly by the act rescissory,—whereby axes and hammers were lifted up upon the carved work of the Temple; hewing down the glorious work of Reformation, restoring abjured Prelacy, rescinding the obligation of our solemn Covenants,—yea, ordering them to be burnt at the Cross of Edinburgh, by the hand of the common hangman; persecuting to the very death, all that owned a work of reformation.

In these bloody days, the headship and sovereignty of Christ was contended for by many of the Lord’s worthies; even unto death: And it has been the peculiar honour of the Church of Scotland, particularly in these days of persecution,—to bear testimony unto Christ, as the alone Head and King of his Church; in opposition to these dangerous and heaven-daring encroachments that were made upon it. And it is much to be regretted and lamented,—that, since the Lord turned back our captivity in any measure at the late wonderful Revolution, whereby we were freed from the yoke of lordly prelacy; we have not been so zealous for our great King and his prerogatives, which were so much invaded, as might been expected upon our deliverance from that Egyptian thraldom. [I do not remember of any particular act of Assembly, since the Revolution,—whereby the rights of the Crown of Christ are asserted, in opposition to the encroachments that were made upon them in these days of public apostasy and persecution]. Yea, instead of that, are there not invasions and encroachments made upon the authority of Christ, and the immunities of his kingdom,—even since that period. Particularly in the end of Queen Anne’s reign, when designs were formed
formed for the overthrow of a Protestant succession; his headship and authority was invaded by an almost boundless toleration of all errors in doctrine, and corruptions in worship: Excepting Popery and blasphemy against the Holy Trinity,—two evils that never prevailed more in the memory of man in these lands, than since the toleration-act was passed. His authority was at the same time invaded by the act restoring patronages; whereby power is given to a malignant Lord or Laird to present a man to take the charge of precious souls, who has perhaps no more concern about their salvation than the Great Turk. And is it not matter of lamentation,—to see some of the judicatories of this Church, whose province it is to contend for the sovereignty of Christ and the rights of his subjects, falling in with patrons and heritors of the nation; in opposition to the known rights of the Christian people, to elect and chuse their own pastors? How are the rights of the Lord’s people invaded and trode upon, by violent settlements up and down the land? [A cry is gone up to heaven against the builders, by the spouse of Christ; like that (Cant. v. 7.): *The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my vail from me.* A cry and complaint came in before the bar of the last Assembly, for relief and redress of these and many other grievances; both from Ministers and people: But instead of a due regard had thereunto, an act is passed confining the power of election unto heritors and elders; whereby a new wound is given to the prerogative of Christ, and the privileges of his subjects]. I shall say the less of this act now,—that I had opportunity to exoner myself with relation to it, before the National Assembly where it was passed. [Only allow me to say,—that whatever Church-authority may be in that act, yet it wants the authority of the Son of God. All ecclesiastical authority under heaven is derived from him; and therefore any act that wants his authority, has no authority at all. And seeing the Reverend Synod has put me in this place, where I am in Christ’s stead; I must be allowed to say of this act, what I apprehend Christ himself would say of it were he personally present where I am;—and that is, that by this act the Corner-stone is receded from; he is rejected in his poor members, and the rich of this world put in their room: If Christ were personally present, where I am by the Synod’s appointment in his stead; he would say, in reference to that act,—*Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these*
these little ones, ye did it to me. By this act, Christ is rejected in his authority; because I can find no warrant from the word of God, to confer the spiritual privileges of his House upon the rich beyond the poor: Whereas, by this act, the man with the gold ring and gay clothing—is preferred unto the man with the vile raiment and poor attire]. I add further of this act,—that I judge it inconsistent with the principles and practice of the best reformed Churches, asserted in their public Confessions of Faith; and particularly with the known principles of this Church since the Reformation, asserted in our Books of Discipline,—which we are bound by solemn covenant to maintain. I am firmly persuaded,—that, if a timely remedy be not provided, this act will very soon terminate in the overthrow of the Church of Scotland; and of a faithful Ministry therein: In regard that the power of electing Ministers is thereby principally lodged in the hands of a set of men, who are generally disaffected to the power of godliness,—to the doctrine, discipline, worship and government of this Church; as well as the government of our gracious Sovereign King GEORGE, and the Protestant succession in his family.

All sound Presbyterians, who read the history of our forefathers,—generally approve of the practice of Mr Samuel Rutherford, Mr James Guthrie, and other worthy Ministers of this Church; who protested against the public resolutions,—as a thing inconsistent with our Covenants, and prejudicial to the work of reformation; although thereby the door was only opened to malignants to come into places of civil or military trust: And we who live at this time of day, may see the pernicious effects these resolutions had in the Church of Scotland. But what would our forefathers have thought, or what will succeeding generations think of this act of Assembly; whereby malignants are vested, not with a civil or military, but with an ecclesiastical power,—in the settlement of the generality of Ministers through the Church of Scotland? By which means the Church of Scotland, and her sacred privileges,—are rendered exceeding cheap, even in the eyes of her avowed enemies; this being a compliment they neither expected nor desired at our hands. But, after all, I have good reason to believe,—that this act is far from being the mind of the generality of Presbyteries through this national Church; and therefore I would gladly hope a seasonable stand shall yet be made against it, in order to prevent its pernicious consequences.

My last inference shall be in a word of exhortation. Are Ministers of the Gospel builders of the Church; and is it the great plot of heaven, to have Christ exalted as the Head-stone of the Corner? Then let me call and exhort my Reverend Brethren and Fathers (and I desire to apply the exhortation to myself), to concur with heart and hand in lifting up the chief Corner-stone; and
making his name to be remembered unto all generations, that the people may praise him for ever and ever. However he has been, or still is rejected by other builders, yet let us study to exalt him; saying one to another,—*O magnify the Lord with me, let us exalt his name together.*

I shall not stay, after what has been said, to use many motives. Only in so many words, let us consider the excellency of his person; and the relation he bears to us and others of our tribe or family, both by nature and office: He being *Immanuel, God with us*; ordained the great Prophet, Priest, and King of the Church,—to answer the maladies and miseries of ignorance, guilt, and bondage we are brought under by the sin of the first Adam. Let us consider,—*That it is his Father's will that all men should honour him as they honour the Father himself:* Yea, *his Father has highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name;* and hath ordered, *that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* Let us consider, that this is the work of the Holy Ghost: The great scope of all his dictates in the word, and of all his graces, influences and operations in the heart,—being to lift up this Corner-stone*. This is the work wherein angels delight to be employed: With what alacrity do they celebrate his nativity, and tell the tidings of it unto the shepherds†. This was the work of all the Prophets under the Old Testament; they all prophesied of him,—testified of his sufferings, and of the glory that should follow. They were as so many harbingers, sent to prepare the world for the reception of this glorious Person.—All the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, given by him unto the New Testament Church,—have had this as the great scope of their ministry; to edify the body of Christ, by lifting up the glory of this Head-stone of the Corner‡. In short, this is and has been the business of the Church militant here upon earth; and will be the work of the Church triumphant through eternity. They all with one voice cry,—*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain; to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing*||. And is it not glorious encouragement to us, to lift up the honour of our Redeemer; when we have such good company to join us in our work?

Again, let us consider that Christ is the *Stone*; without which there can be no building; for he is the Church’s all; *Christ is all and in all:* He is her light, her life, her righteousness, her strength, her peace, her food, her clothing, her wisdom, her holiness. So that if he be wanting, all is wanting; and the Church is ruined. We cannot answer the commission we bear from our great Master, if we do not exalt the chief Corner-stone. *It is Christ whom we preach*§. We are to be of Paul’s spirit; *to know nothing among our
our hearers, *but Christ and him crucified*; We are always to *triumph* in the revelation of Christ, so as the *savour of his knowledge* may be made *manifest by us in every place*. To conclude, we can never finish our course with joy, and the ministry we have received of the Lord; except this be the great scope of our work,—whether in doctrine, discipline, worship or government.

I shall shut up this discourse, with a few *Advices*; in order to our being successful builders of this glorious fabric, wherein Christ is the Head-Stone of the corner.

1. Let us beware of the fatal errors before-mentioned; whereby the Jewish builders ruined their once glorious fabric, and buried themselves in the ruins thereof. Let us beware of these doctrines vented in our day, which disparage the person of our glorious Redeemer; and derogate from his supreme and independent Deity, or his headship and sovereignty in his Church. Let us beware of nauseating the spirituality of his doctrine, and the sublime mysteries of our holy religion; preferring thereunto the harangues of Moralists. When we preach the law, let us open it in its extent and spirituality; so as to turn in its edge upon the heart and conscience, that it may be a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Let us preach up the everlasting righteousness of the Son, as the only ground of a sinner’s justification; and beware of every thing, that has the least tendency to foster a sinner in his hope of salvation by the works of the law. Let us beware of blocking up the door of access to Christ, by legal qualifications; which are no where to be had, but in Christ himself. Let us beware of formality, either in preaching or praying; whereby we may deaden the ordinances of God to our own souls, or the souls of our hearers: And, in order thereto, let us take care to license or lay hands upon none,—but such as, in the judgment of charity, we have reason to think are acquainted with the power of godliness; even though they have been trained up in literature, at the foot of a professor of divinity. Let us beware of carnal policy, in the matters of Christ’s kingdom and glory. Let us beware of valuing ourselves upon the favour of men, great or small. Especially let us take care, that we be not swayed in the matters of Christ with the favour of great men; for this has been a snare in Mispah, and a net spread upon Tabor. Let us study impartially the exercise of discipline, and beware of turning the edge of it against them that deserve it least. And let us set ourselves to stop these passages in to the house of God, by which thieves and robbers most ordinarily enter, that the house of God be not turned into a den of thieves.

2. In order to our being successful builders, let us seek the builder’s word from the great Master-builder: For there is a word which Christ gives his faithful Ministers, whereby the art of building is much conveyed. *I have given them thy word*. Without this word from the mouth of Christ, we will never know the true art of build-

*John xvii. 14.*
ing the Church: By this word, the man of God is made a perfect builder, thoroughly furnished unto every good work. And if you ask me, what is that word? I answer, it is an experimental acquaintance with the power of the word upon the soul: particularly the knowledge of that leading mystery, *God manifested in the flesh*.

3. Let us take care, that every stone of the building correspond with the foundation and Corner-Stone: Whatever doctrines or practices do not hang right with this regulating Stone, let them be cast. In order to which,—let us examine our own and others doctrines and conversation, by the plumb-line and infallible rule of the word*.

4. Let us observe the signs of the times; and whenever we discern the danger a-coming, either from open enemies or pretended friends, [or our fellow builders going wrong; let us give the cry, like faithful watchmen: And though they be offended, there is no help for that. It is a heavy charge that is laid by God against some as above,—that they were *dumb dogs* that *could not bark*]; but preferred their own carnal case, unto the safety of the Church†.

5. Let us wrestle much at a throne of grace, for the countenance of the great Master; and assistance of his Spirit: for *except the Lord build the house, the builders build in vain;*—*Paul may plant, and Apollos water; but it is God who giveth the increase.*

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Upon the delivery of the foregoing Sermon, the Synod appointed a committee to draw up Remarks upon it: And they spent much of three days, in warm reasonings concerning it; particularly as to the passages referred to in the Committee’s report, which are printed here in a larger character. Upon the whole,—the Synod having appointed (October 12th, 1732) that Mr Erskine should be rebuked and admonished at their bar, for these passages of his Sermon; but finding that he was not in the house: They “resolved, if he be in the house to-morrow, to call him up to be rebuked; and if he should not be present to-morrow, they resolved to call him up at their meeting in April next—to rebuke and admonish him in terms of the sentence.”

At their meeting in Stirling, on the 12th of April 1733,—“Mr Erskine being called and compearing, and the Synod going to execute their sentence in the terms of their appointment;” he offered to deliver his mind as to the affair of the censure upon his sermon, which was then before them,—but was not allowed: Whereupon he adhered to his appeal, and withdrew. But being called back, he was told by the Moderator that he was allowed to speak;

*Isa. viii. 2. †Isa. lvi. 10, 11, 12.*
speak; and thereupon he read a paper (immediately withdrawing when he had done so), the tenor whereof follows, *viz.*

“According to the utterance given by the Lord to me at *Perth*, I delivered his mind; particularly with relation to some *prevailing evils of the day*, which to me are matter of confession: And therefore *I dare not retract* the least part of that *Testimony*. I am heartily sorry, that ever the Reverend Synod should have commenced a process against me, for what I am persuaded was nothing else but truth; especially when they have never yet made it appear, that I have in the least receded from the *word of God*,—and our *approven Standards* of doctrine, worship, discipline and government. Every man has his own proper gift of utterance; and according to the gift bestowed on me, so I expressed myself at *Perth*; and if I had given offence by any expressions uttered by me at that time, I should very willingly retract and beg pardon: But I hope my Reverend Brethren will excuse me to say, *That I am not yet convinced of any just ground given for a Rebuke and Admonition.*”

**THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.**
THE
PRESENT TRUTH:
A
DISPLAY
OF THE
SECESSION-TESTIMONY;
IN THE
THREE PERIODS
OF THE
RISE, STATE, AND MAINTENANCE
of that TESTIMONY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME II.
Containing the MAINTENANCE of the Secession-
Testimony

WITH A THREEFOLD APPENDIX:
Viz.

I. A Vindication of the JUDICIAL
TESTIMONY, concerning the
Revolution and Union Settle-
m ents.

II. A Plea concerning the Extent
of Redemption.

III. An Examination of a late
Survey.

Ye should earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints. Jude,
v.3.

Established in the PRESENT TRUTH.

2 Pet.i.12.

EDINBURGH:
Printed by R. Fleming and A. Neill.
M.DCC.LXXIV.
THE

PREFACE

The RISE and STATE of the Secession-Testimony have been set forth, at a proper length, in the preceding Volume; comprehending the several STEPS which were taken, in the forming of it by the Associate Presbytery. And the MAINTENANCE of that Testimony, by the Associate Synod, comes now to be displayed: As the great variety and importance of the matters belonging thereto, may be generally apprehended from the table of Contents subjoined to this Preface.

A matter of principal concernment, under the PERIOD now referred to,—is the melancholy Breach of the Associate Synod, which took place in April 1747; with the controversy about the Religious Clause of some Burgess-oaths*, by which it was introduced,—and the Proceedings which were consequential. As this matter was handled, about that time, in various and opposite publications,—the principal writer against the Synod was the Reverend Mr RALPH ERSKINE, whose name and just reputation were of great importance to his cause: He having been long a very eminent light in the Church; and one whose memory, as a Minister of the Gospel, must be precious, from the various works which he had then given to the public,—so long as the Gospel continues to be dispensed in the English tongue.

But when he came to deal in controversial writings, upon the subject above-mentioned; it was evident that, in

holy

*It will appear afterward,—that this affair was very natively, seasonably and inevitably brought under the consideration of the Associate Synod. And, as it had great consequences among them,—it was, in itself of great importance; while a swearing about Religion belongs to the most solemn intercourse between God and Men. And a trifling about such an Oath, or a vilifying the question about it as an idle debate, an insipid controversy, (according to the style of Prefacers on the other side),—is a trifling with or vilifying its glorious object.
holy Sovereignty, God left him to try him,—for hiding pride from man: While these writings were signalised by a very uncommon strain of furious extravagance; running through the gross misrepresentation of facts, and the grievous misconstructing of the opposite cause, with the sophistical imposition upon the reader’s understanding and conscience,—in which their whole strength did consist. However, no further remarks were made upon these very strange writings,—than what appeared quite necessary for obviating their pernicious tendency, among persons disposed for admitting the truth.

About ten years ago, being a considerable time after Mr Erskine’s death, his other works were published in two folio Volumes,—with a Preface by Mr Fisher: In which the Prefacer has ventured to pollute that valuable work, and the memory of its Author; by a most injurious and reproachful account of the aforesaid controversy and breach, without so much as one article of undisguised truth in the whole,—which account he endeavours to support by some quotations from Mr Erskine’s controversial writings. And he scruples not to give this character of these writings,—that therein the author “gives sufficient proof of his ability in fair and candid argumentation from Scripture and reason, without sophistical cavilling or subtile evasion:” Which character (a barefaced reverse of truth) may pass for downright banter; when the very quotations made, though not the worst of these writings, bear a most glaring contradiction to it.

It was this Preface (which the now-glorified Author of the work prefaced, is supposed to know of it, must be reckoned to have for an object of eternal detestation) that suggested the first thought of attempting to make the present display: For while the most grievous injury to the Associate Synod, and through them to the Lord’s cause among their hands,—is there annexed to a book that may last through succeeding ages; it appeared necessary that an antidote should be provided against such calumnious and pernicious abuse,—of a more durable nature than commonly belongs to pamphlets.

And this work has been further occasioned, by a late Survey of the controversy betwixt the Associate Synod and their
their separating Brethren: A performance quite abandoned as to all common measures of truth or decency; by which the Author (a novel member of the Synod of these Brethren) hath turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock.

The genuine state of the case is laid open in this volume, more fully and distinctly than by any former publications; the matters of fact set forth in these publications, which the opposite party did not then venture to impugn,—being now properly laid together, and explained: And still with the sensible advantage which belongs to truth,—while the parts of it naturally hang together, as it were answering for itself; without needing (as in the writings on the other side) any forged and self betraying connections. But while this is done, in a proper opposition to the many gross and violent misrepresentations which have been made of the case; it is without any special considering of these: Further than as a direct Examination of the aforesaid Survey is referred for an Appendix, by

ADAM GIB.

EDINBURGH:
April 18. 1774.

N.B. As the Examination bears many references to a foregoing part of the present Volume (p. 17,—111.), it is necessary that this part be first perused.

Some Errors of the Press are corrected on the last page.
A LIST of the several Pamphlets (being public Acts and Deeds), which contain the Maintenance of the Secession-Testimony; and from which the following Display is made: With their respective dates; and the octavo pages (some in very small and close print) of which they consist.

1. Acts and Proceedings of the Associate Synod, in April 1747. 168
2. The Proceedings of the Associate Synod, in August and November 1747; and in January, April and August 1748. 152
3. The Proceedings of the Associate Synod, in November 1747, and in,—January and August 1748; concerning Mr Nairn, and others. 30
4. The Proceedings of the Associate Synod, in April and August 1749; and in February 1750. 124

N.B. The 1st, 2d and 4th of these Articles,—are concerning the Religious Clause of some Burgess-oaths; and the Case of the Separating Brethren: The 4th including also the further proceeding against Mr Nairn.

5. Act of the Associate Synod, in April 1754; containing an Assertion of some Gospel-truths, in opposition to Arminian Errors upon the head of universal Redemption. 26
6. The Proceedings of the Associate Synod, in March and August 1755; concerning Mr Thomas Mair. 122
7. A Solemn Warning by the Associate Synod, in August 1758. 64
8. Several smaller Acts of the Synod, viz. (1.) A Declaration concerning the clause of Civil Allegiance in some Burgess-oaths; in August 1747. (2.) Act concerning General Engagements of subjection and obedience in some Burgess-oaths; in April 1749. (3.) Act concerning the Oaths imposed upon Constables and Church-wardens, in England and Ireland,—and concerning the Bishops-courts, and Church-payments in these kingdoms; in March 1752. (4.) Act concerning the Renovation of our Solemn Covenants in England and Ireland; in March 1752. (5.) Act concerning the Constable-oath in Scotland; in August 1752. (6.) Act about the Chapman-oath; in August 1754. (7.) Act concerning the Mason-oath; in August 1757. 21
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PERIOD III.

The MAINTENANCE of the SECESSION-TESTIMONY.

INTRODUCTION.

The ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY finished the State of their Testimony, in the manner which has been represented; having had no occasion for any further step of that sort before their dissolution. But an eminent beauty and completeness of the foregoing State, unto which the Lord was pleased to bring it among their hands, will readily be much better apprehended than at present,—when the Lord shall again build Zion; when the whole fabric of the gross corruptions, and of the corrupt refinements or pretended improvements of the present age,—shall be tumbled down, into deserved ruin and contempt.

For upwards of two years before that dissolution, the Presbytery had been thinking of disjoining themselves into several Presbyteries; for meeting together in an Associate Synod:——Upon considering that their number was, by the good hand of the Lord, considerably increased: That so frequent attendance at any places of meeting, as their presbyterial capacity required,—was very impracticable by many of the members, from the distances of their situations: And that, in their presbyterial capacity, they could not get properly through the great multiplicity of their business; while, beside their other momentuous affairs, all references and appeals from Sessions, with numerous applications from different quarters,—came immediately before them.

But they found it necessary to delay that matter; till the three last Steps which were under consideration, about the stating of the Testimony among their hands, were accomplished.
complished. After this, and when the aforesaid reasons for a disjunction were much upon the increase; they appointed a committee of their number (at Dunfermline on the 7th of August 1744), to prepare a scheme of that disjunction. The scheme was accordingly under their consideration,—at Edinburgh, in October the same year; and, after mature deliberation, it was enacted by them,—on the eleventh day of that month: To the following effect.

They disjoined themselves into three Presbyteries,—to be called the Associate Presbyteries of Dunfermline, Glasgow and Edinburgh; which were to hold their first meetings at these places respectively, upon the fourth Wednesday of November ensuing,—the first day of their meetings to be observed, by each of them, as a day of fasting and humiliation: And all of them to meet in the ASSOCIATE SYNOD; for the first time, at Stirling,—upon the first Tuesday of March, 1745. The three Presbyteries were determined as follows, viz.

I. The Associate Presbytery of DUNFERMLINE was appointed to consist of the Ministers, together with a Ruling Elder from the respective Sessions, of the following Associate Congregations, viz.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONGREGATIONS:</th>
<th>MINISTERS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dunfermline</td>
<td>Mess. Ralph Erskine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunnichen</td>
<td>Andrew Arrot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burntisland</td>
<td>James Thomson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abernethy</td>
<td>Alexander Moncrieff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orwell</td>
<td>Thomas Mair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceres</td>
<td>William Campbell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>George Brown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesly</td>
<td>John Erskine.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And it was appointed that the following Associate Congregations, still vacant, should belong to the said Presbytery, viz. Kirkcaldy, Kinkell, Muckhart, Kinclaven, Dundee, Montrose,—Ross, Murray and Buchan: Together with any new acceders or associate congregations which might arise on the north side of Forth; excepting Monteith, and those who belonged or might accede to the Associate Congregation of Stirling.

II. The
II. The Associate Presbytery of GLASGOW was appointed to consist of the Ministers, together with a Ruling Elder from the respective Sessions, of the following Associate Congregations, viz.

**CONGREGATIONS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Congregations</th>
<th>Ministers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow,</td>
<td>James Fisher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilmaurs,</td>
<td>David Smyton.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balfron,</td>
<td>John Cleland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambusnethan,</td>
<td>David Horn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falkirk,</td>
<td>Henry Erskine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilbarchan,</td>
<td>John McCara.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumbernauld,</td>
<td>Andrew Black.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And it was appointed that the following Associate Congregations, still vacant, should belong to the said Presbytery, viz. Mearns, Kilbride, Sanquhar, and Orr in Galloway: Together with any new acceders or associate congregations, which might arise within the said bounds.

III. The Associate Presbytery of EDINBURGH was appointed to consist of the Ministers, together with a Ruling Elder from the respective Sessions, of the following Associate Congregations, viz.

**CONGREGATIONS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Congregations</th>
<th>Ministers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linton,</td>
<td>Mess. James Mair.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stow,</td>
<td>William Hutton.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh,</td>
<td>Adam Gib.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linlithgow,</td>
<td>Andrew Clarkson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midholm,</td>
<td>Patrick Matthew.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gateshaw,</td>
<td>James Scot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunse,</td>
<td>John Whyte.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annandale,</td>
<td>George Murray.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haddington,</td>
<td>Robert Archibald.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And it was appointed that the following Associate Congregations, still vacant, should belong to the said Presbytery, viz. Dalkeith, Stitchil, and Jedburgh: Together with any new acceders or associate congregations, which might arise within the said bounds.
Of the Erection of the Associate Synod. Period III.

It was further appointed, that any acceders or associate congregations which might arise betwixt the boundaries allotted, as above, to the several Presbyteries,—should belong to the Presbytery next adjacent: And that the Associate Presbytery of Glasgow should have the charge of acceders in Ireland: As also, that the Reverend Mr Thomas Somerville*, Minister at Newcastle upon Tyne, should belong as a member to the Associate Presbytery of Edinburgh; and that the said Presbytery should have the charge of acceders in Newcastle and London, with any others which might arise on the English side†.

The ASSOCIATE SYNOD, having held their first meeting at Stirling on the first week of March 1745,—have continued their meetings hitherto, in the course of thirty years‡. During a great part of that time, they have been exercised in sore labour;—of contendings for the testimony among their hands: The business carved out for them in providence, having been,—not properly an adding unto or enlarging the state of that Testimony; but a MAINTENANCE of it, as delivered over to them by the Associate Presbytery,—against various oppositions and inconsistencies.

*Mr Somerville was received to a seat in the Associate Presbytery, only at this meeting which enacted the disjunction. He never attended any meetings of the Associate Synod, except two at Stirling; in March 1745, and in September 1746.——He never attended any meetings of the Associate Presbytery of Edinburgh.
†In process of time, the three Presbyteries came to be subdivided,—and some others were constituted; so that the Associate Synod now contains eleven Presbyteries, viz. Eight in Scotland; These of Edinburgh, Earlston; Glasgow, Stirling, Sanquhar; Perth, Kirkcaldy, and Elgin;—Two in Ireland; these of Moyrah and Lisburn, and of Newton Lamavady: With one in America, the Presbytery of Pensylvania. And these Presbyteries consist of about one hundred Ministers.
‡They have held two meetings every year; excepting that they met but once in 1769. They met four times, in the year 1745; and thrice a year, in each of the four years next following,—and in 1762. Twelve of their meetings, previous to 1756, were for two weeks at a time. The first day of their meetings once a year (sometimes oftener), has been observed as a day of solemn fasting and humiliation. And they have appointed two general fasts yearly, through all their congregations.— Their meetings have been all held at Edinburgh; except that these in March and September and November 1745, and September 1746 were held at Stirling.
consistencies. This very important business, which they have
been going through,—is divisible, into seven different
PROGRESSIONS, viz. Concerning the Religious Clause of
some Burgess-oaths; concerning Mr Thomas Nairn, and others
who took part with him; concerning the renovation of our
Solemn Covenants, in England and Ireland; concerning
various other oaths and obligations; concerning Arminian
Errors, upon the head of universal redemption; concerning a
solemn Warning; and concerning proposed Addresses to the
KING.

PROGRESSION I. Concerning the Religious Clause of
some Burgess-oaths.

Though the disjunction of the Associate Presbytery, in the
particular scheme of it,—was not enacted by them till the last
sederunt of their meeting in October 1744, on the eleventh day
of that month; yet they had come to a resolution by a vote, on
the 9th,—“to divide into more Presbyteries, before the
dissolution of this meeting.”

The Reverend Mr Alexander Moncrieff, who came not up
till the 10th, gave in a paper of Scruples about the said
Resolution; in which, among other things, there was the
following passage, viz. “Although the Presbytery have
determined both the abjuration and allegiance to be sinful, yet
they have not considered the Burgess-oath; which he
apprehends may be found by the Presbytery to be sinful, if
they thought proper to take the same under consideration.”
The Presbytery then employed the Reverend Mr Ralph Erskine
and another Member as a Committee, for preparing Answers
to these Scruples: And the Answers, which were unanimously
approved of, contained the following passage, viz. “As the
Burgess-oath has not hitherto been under the Presbytery’s
consideration,”—and “as all the members will have better
access to consider upon that matter in their respective
Presbyteries, for having their opinions thereanent signified to
the first meeting of Synod; so the Synod cannot but be in a
better capacity for overtaking a consideration thereof in the
manner proposed, than the Presbytery in the present
situation.”—Accordingly, the act of dis-

junction
junction bore the following appointment, *viz.* “That the several
Presbyteries consider upon what *overtures* they may think
needful, for further reformation; and lay such as may occur,
before the meeting of Synod.”

Among various overtures which were brought up to the
meeting of Synod in March 1745, there was one from the
Associate Presbytery of *Dunfermline*: “For the Synod to take
under their consideration,—whether or not the Burgess-oath be
agreeable to the word of God, and to the received principles of
this Church founded thereupon; and particularly to these
contained in the Judicial Act and Testimony emitted by the
Associate Presbytery, in the Act relating to Mr Nairn’s affair,
and in the Act concerning the renovation of our Covenants”?
and there was another overture from the Associate Presbytery
of *Edinburgh*: “For the Synod to consider upon, and
endeavour to remove any public bars that may be presently
found in the way of due progress in covenanting-work.”

These two overtures were laid before the committee of
overtures, in the same order as above: And that from
*Dunfermline*-Presbytery (after some deliberation upon it, as
nearly connected with due progress in covenanting-work), was
unanimously transmitted to the Synod. Some brethren of
*Edinburgh*-Presbytery explained the other general overture,—
as intended with no particular respect, but to the same affair of
the Burgess-oath; signifying that the said affair having been
under some consideration in their Presbytery, the overture with
a view thereto, had been laid so generally,—upon supposing
that the matter would be introduced more expressly from
elsewhere: And so, upon the transmitting of the other
overture, this was naturally given up,—as comprehended in
the other, and admitting of no separate consideration.

In consequence of the above transmission, the *Burgess-
oath* became a subject of deliberation in the Associate Synod.
And never did the members of that Court get any other cause
in hand, of greater urgency for being proceeded in to a proper
decision: For as they had agreed to set about covenanting-
work in their several congregations, (and two of them had
done so already); this work
could
could not admit of shifting or waving any question or
difficulty that occurred, about the consistency of any other
oath that any of their people were concerned in. At the same
time, there were no fears, as there were no threatening
appearances, in the entry,—that this affair might have a less
comfortable issue, than others (of much more real difficulty
and complexness) had formerly come to in the Associate
Presbytery.

But the case turned out far otherwise. The opposition
which a few Ministers stated themselves in to the generality of
their brethren, upon that affair,—brought matters to the dismal
breach which is generally known, and will be afterwards
explained. The Lord saw meet to have the Associate Synod
thus melted and tried, in the fire of a controversy about the
Burgess-oath; for a proof of their single and stedfast adherence
to their witnessing profession, after having come under the
most solemn engagements for maintaining the same. But,
amidst all the matter of lamentation which that woful event has
afforded,—there is also matter of great thankfulness; that the
Lord was graciously pleased to direct and over-rule, so as to
prevent the threatened abolition of their witnessing
character,—the threatened ruin of his work as among their
hands.

The controversial writings in which the aforesaid
opposition did at length break out (and publications upon the
subject began on that side), afforded a very singular evidence
of the connexion between doctrinal and historical truth, in the
management of a controversy; that as the former is opposed,
the latter also is departed from. Prejudices and false
reasonings can find no proper footing in the truth of facts; but
must borrow strength from a mis-stating and disguising of
them. It was never supposed, that the opposite brethren did
willfully err,—in the one or other: But the darkness and
confusion of views that takes place on the wrong side of a
controversy, may produce a strange misapprehension of facts
concerning it.—Accordingly, the historical parts of these
writings were generally upon that plan; either false as to the
matter, or falsified as to the manner of representation. But
though the publications on the Synod’s side did correct these
errors, it was often without taking any particular notice of
them; or

only
Of the Synod’s decision about Period III.

only by a proper stating of facts, in opposition to them: And this correction was never particularly impugned; nor indeed could be so, with any tolerable face,—considering that evidence with which the facts, when properly stated, did speak for themselves. And it is here intended to proceed after the same manner; by representing matters of fact as they really stood, in a direct opposition to the various falsehoods and misrepresentations which have been published on the other side,—yet without taking any particular notice of them, in a controversial form.

The things to be now set forth are these, viz. The Synod’s Decision about the Religious Clause of some Burgess-oaths*: Their procedure toward this decision, at several meetings previous to that in which it was passed; with the opposition made at these meetings: Their procedure to it, at the meeting in which it was passed; with the opposition then made: The opposition made to it, in the course of the year after that meeting: The Rupture of the Associate Synod; the Restoration of the Associate Synod; and their procedure against their separating brethren.

Section I. Of the Synod’s Decision, about the Religious Clause of some Burgess-Oaths.

When the Synod was met on the 6th of March 1745, they appointed a pro-re-nata meeting to be held in May following; for several pieces of business before them, which they could not then overtake. Next day, the overture concerning the Burgess-oath (the foremost of thirteen overtures transmitted by their committee) was unanimously received by them, and unanimously referred to the said pro-re-nata meeting. At this meeting, the Synod began with considering the first, or the religious clause,—in copies of some Burgess-oaths, which were read before them: And after much reasoning upon the subject, at this and several other meetings; they came forward, on the 9th day of April 1746, to the following decision concerning it, viz.

“The Synod find, That a swearing the religious clause of some Burgess-oaths, viz. [Here I protest, before God]

“and

They could never hear of so many as eight Burghs, that had the religious clause in their Burgess-oath.
“and your Lordships, that I profess, and allow with my heart, the true religion presently professed within this realm, and authorized by the laws thereof: I shall abide thereat, and defend the same, to my life’s end; renouncing the Roman religion called Papistry], by any under their inspection, as the said clause comes necessarily in this period to be used and applied, does not agree unto the present state and circumstances of the testimony for religion and reformation,—which this Synod, with those under their inspection, are maintaining; particularly, that it does not agree unto nor consist with an entering into the bond for renewing our Solemn Covenants: And that therefore those of the Secession cannot further, with safety of conscience, and without sin, swear any Burgess-oath with the said Religious Clause; while matters, with reference to the profession and settlement of religion, continue in such circumstances as at present. Moreover, the Synod find, That burgesses of the Secession, who are already concerned in such Oaths, should be required, in order to their admission into the bond for renewing our Solemn Covenants, to attend conference with their respective Sessions; for signifying satisfaction with the present judgment of the Synod; and a sense of the mistake they have hitherto, through inadvertency, been under, concerning such Burgess-oaths.”

With regard to the above DECISION, several things are to be observed. As,

I. The whole tenour of this decision, and precisely in the same terms,—had been for some time insisted upon, in the form of a healing overture*. And that it was properly of this nature, may appear from the following considerations.

1st, It

*Mr Ralph Erskine having assisted in Sacramental-work at Edinburgh, on the first Lord’s day of March 1746; a Brother had a conversation with him, on Tuesday the 4th of that month,—respecting the affair of the Burgess-oath, then in dependence before the Synod. That brother expressed an anxious concern for having matters accommodated; in the way of removing some mistakes which he conceived Mr Erskine and others were under, about what he and others really intended upon that affair. For this purpose, after serious and amicable reasoning, he drew up a motion or overture, for being proposed to the ensuing meeting of

Synod;
1st, It was well known, that the opposition made to a decision upon the first, or the Religious Clause,—was specially intended to prevent an examination of some following clauses of the oath; (as sundry clauses had been quarreled, when the subject was generally conversed upon in the Committee of overtures,—at the meeting in May 1745.): And particularly, that it was designed for obstructing a procedure to the second, or the clause of Civil Allegiance; upon a most chimerical, though inveterate supposition,—as if some had anti-government principles to bring forth upon that clause, when they should get forward to it. And, for obviating this prejudice,—the decision contained a subsisting of further procedure, at that juncture, in the whole affair of the Burgess-oath. Thus, it abstracted from any thing like an absolute condemnation of the Oath.

2dly, It likewise abstracted from various objections against the Religious Clause, which had been brought forth in the course of reasoning on the subject. As,

1. Some brethren conceived it wrong, to have a Religious Clause and Testimony, being of an evangelical nature and use,—limited unto any Burgess-oath. And they conceived it wrong, to have such a clause, of a general nature, laid and continued in any Burgess-oath: Because, in their opinion, either that general clause could not still be lawfully sworn,—from not having it still accommodated to new advances of testimony in the profession of religion, after the reformation from Popery; or, if it were so accommodated, this would make the terms of civil and religious communion of equal strictness.

2. They conceived it wrong, to have Magistrates of burghs acknowledged in their imposing, by themselves, any Synod; as what he supposed would be satisfying to all the brethren on the same side of the controversy with him, for bringing it to an issue. With this overture, Mr Erskine then expressed a full satisfaction; and a rejoicing in the prospect of having the controversy terminated after that manner: And he was known to have continued of the same mind,—till an interview with the brother who had begun the opposition, on the evening of the first day of the Synod’s meeting.—Now this very overture was proposed to the Synod, on the first week of their meeting; the very same that, without any variation, was enacted into a decision,—on the week following.
any such clause; considering the marches that take place betwixt spiritual and civil jurisdiction, (according to 2 Chron. xix. 11.): And considering that it is not competent for these Magistrates, to inspect and cognosce upon the moral and religious qualifications which are necessary in persons, for warranting the administration of such an Oath to them; especially as the laws of the civil society do not warrant a limiting of Burgess-privileges, unto persons of the moral and religious qualifications that are necessary in being admitted to a solemn religious oath.

3. Another objection was taken from the connexion betwixt the religious clause, and the clause of Penalty which doth now take place in some of these Burgess-oaths; whereby the swearer engages to pay a certain piece of money into the Town’s common Good, so often as he shall break any part of this his oath. For they conceived, that this clause contained a supposition and penalty—dreadfully inconsistent with the nature of swearing; especially of swearing unto religion: As also they conceived that, by the said clause, the swearer did virtually become free of the town,—for perjury in the matter of the Oath, even about religion; at a rate of money.

These are some objections (beside that, according to ordinary fame, there are ordinarily many accidental abuses,—in the way of administering and dealing with Burgess-oaths, having that solemn clause), which were of great weight with some brethren. But, for peace-sake, the Synod abstracted from all these in their decision; having given no judgment, whether or not the unlawfulness of swearing the religious clause might be extended any further than they had done.

3dly, The decision abstracted from all consideration of that religious clause, as to the swearing of it in any former period; being wholly confined to the swearing of it in this period: So that there was no room left, for charging it with any reflection upon our reforming ancestors. It had not even the remotest appearance, of condemning any thing that they ever justified or practiced or knew; while it was versant only about a swearing of the religious clause in this period,—a matter absolutely out of the way of their knowledge or concern. It even took no account
of the Burgess-oath, as having ever had a being in any former period; which indeed the swearing of it thereby condemned—never had.

4thly, It also abstracted from all consideration of any present swearing of the religious clause, except among those of the Secession. Whatever might be argued or inferred, by parity of reason, against a present swearing of it by members of the established Church,—this was what the decision took no account of. And indeed they could not be found fault with for swearing it, but as found fault with for continuing in communion with the established Church: While, in swearing it, they acted very consistently with their being of that communion.

5thly, It finally abstracted from all consideration of a present swearing of the religious clause, even among those of the Secession,—except “while matters, with reference to the profession and settlement of religion, continue in such circumstances as at present.” Some brethren (as above explained) had objected against such a clause being in a Burgess-oath at all; especially when new advances of Testimony in the profession of religion have been attained, since our Reformation from Popery. But the Synod’s decision abstracted from this; being confined to the consideration of swearing that clause, only under the continuance of the present circumstances,—as to the profession and settlement of religion. And herein also it abstracted from any thing like an absolute condemnation of the Oath.

II. It may now be proper, to take some view of the ground upon which the Synod’s decision proceeded; in striking against a present swearing of the religious clause, among those of the Secession: “That a swearing (of it) by any under their inspection, as the said clause comes necessarily in this period to be used and applied, does not agree unto the present state and circumstances of the Testimony for religion and reformation,—which this Synod, with those under their inspection, are maintaining; particularly, that it does not agree unto nor consist with an entering into the Bond, for renewing our solemn Covenant.”

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The truth of this position is among the plainest things which can be the subject of consideration; carrying in it a self-evidence to every mind that understands the matters spoken of, and is not debauched by absurd prejudices to the contrary.—A great deal of dust has indeed been raised, for getting it put out of sight; by such methods of reasoning, as may well be reckoned a disgrace to the reasoning faculty of human nature. But it is not needful, that there should be any controversial discussion of the subject, in this place: Which, however necessary and useful for laying the dust that has been raised about it,—can really cast no additional light upon it, beyond its own evidence. A plain case is rather obscured, by laborious reasonings in its behalf; and it speaks best for itself. Explication, instead of argumentation, is all that the present case properly requires: And, for this, the following notes may suffice.

1st. The subject of the Oath, in the clause referred to, is called the True Religion; a name of no certain or fixed sense, but as defined by the words following: According to which, the swearer means it of what is professed and authorized in this realm—under the character of the true religion; as in general the Protestant religion, opposed to the Roman religion called Papistry.

2dly, The Oath is manifestly of a current nature; still respecting the true religion—under the character of being presently professed and authorized: And so, the meaning of it has never any relation to the past,—but always to the present state of matters, in the professing and authorizing of the true religion; continually changing, just according to all the changes which take place in that professing and authorizing.

3dly, It is therefore obvious at first view, in what manner the Oath of the religious clause “comes necessarily in this period to be used and applied:” That it is necessarily used about and applied unto the true religion, just according to the professing and authorising of it in this period,—among the hands of the present national, or established Church of Scotland.

4thly, The swearer acknowledges a present professing of the true religion in the established Church; and, at the same time, solemnly asserts a present professing of
of it on his own part. But these two professings cannot, with any ingenuity, be taken for two different ways of professing. The professing in the established Church, and the swearer’s professing,—must be taken for one and the same way of professing the true religion: So that the swearer must be understood, according to the terms and nature of the Oath,—to take up with the professing of it in the established Church, as the pattern of his professing it. The Oath must therefore mean the swearer’s satisfaction—with the present public state of the true religion, as to that professing and authorizing of it which is among the hands of the present established Church: So far as to mean, that he sees no reason or warrant for a different way of professing the true religion—in a separate communion from her; no such defections and corruptions, in the present professing and authorizing of it among her hands,—as to require or warrant a secession from her, unto a professing of it in the way of a public Testimony against these defections and corruptions.——It is therefore, most evidently, an Oath of immediate and full communion with the present established Church: Bearing the swearer’s engagement to abide at and defend the true religion, in that communion,—to his life’s end. Wherefore,

5thly, The Oath of the religious clause doth materially and plainly amount—unto a solemn abjuration of the whole Secession-Testimony; or of the whole present Testimony for religion and reformation, as maintained by the Associate Synod and those under their inspection,—and avouched in the Bond for renewing our solemn Covenants: So that, to swear this oath of the Bond, and also the Oath of the religious clause in Burgess-oaths,—would be, upon the matter, to avouch and abjure, promiscuously, the whole Testimony among their hands.

The Synod’s decision was then most evidently just, and highly necessarily; being also expressed in the most modest terms that the subject could admit of. And the swearing which it strikes against must continue to be sinful,—“while matters, with reference to the profession and settlement of religion, continue in such circumstances as at present:” While the said profession and settlement continue in the present state of defection and corruption; as
also, while these ought to be stated in more special points of Testimony than only against Popery.

And the Synod has taken up no new way of thinking, in this whole affair; no other than was entertained and avowed, upon a parallel case, by the witnesses for religion and reformation in the last century.—An act of Parliament was passed in the year 1633, of this tenor, viz. “Our Sovereign Lord, with advice and consent of the Estates, ratifies and approves all and whatsoever acts and statutes made before, anent the liberty and freedom of the true Kirk of God, and religion presently professed within this realm; and ordains the same to stand in full force and effect, as if they were specially mentioned.” But a goodly number of the Nobility, Barons and Burgessesses, dissented from this act: As (according to the historian Rapin) “the whole artifice of this act consisted in these words, religion presently professed; for thereby were confirmed all the innovations in the discipline of the Kirk of Scotland, to which the opposers of the act would not agree;—they would not admit these words, presently professed.”

Accordingly, when a royal proclamation was made, in the year 1638,—for renewing and subscribing the national Covenant or Confession of Faith, dated 1580; the King assuring, that he never intended to admit of any change or alteration in the true religion already established and professed;—and the Privy Council declaring, that the national Covenant was to be renewed and subscribed according to the said date and tenor thereof 1580; and as it was then professed within this kingdom: Yet the witnesses and reformers in that period, (Noblemen, Barons, Gentlemen, Burgessesses, Ministers and Commons),—made a protestation at the Cross of Edinburgh, against complying with the said proclamation:—Because (said they) “it is most manifest, that his Majesty’s mind, intention and commandment is no other, but that the Confession be sworn for the maintenance of religion as it is presently professed,—and thus as it includeth, and containeth within the compass thereof, the foresaid novations and episcopacy; which, under that name, were also ratified in the first

“Parli-
“Parliament holden by his Majesty (1633);—we must affirm the religion in the year 1580 and at this time, to be altogether one and the same; and thus must acknowledge, that there is no novation in religion.”

Agreeably to this, when they renewed the national Covenant in the year 1638, by a new Bond suited to their circumstances; in the very first sentence of that Bond, they found fault with the then present establishment and profession of religion, as having corruptions and novations in them: So that they swore to the true religion, in a way of looking backward,—with an express reference to the establishment and profession thereof, which had taken place under the former period of reformation; “as it was established and professed, before the foresaid novations.”—They swore to the true religion with a reference to the past, in a way of testifying against the faults of the present profession and establishment thereof. For they were of the mind, that a swearing to the true religion, in that time of public defections and corruptions, with a reference to the then present profession of it,—would have been a swearing to it “as it includeth, and containeth within the compass thereof,” these defections and corruptions.

III. From what was found, as to the sinfulness of a present swearing of the religious clause in some Burgess-oaths,—the Synod’s decision did infer as follows, viz. “That Burgesses of the Secession, who are already concerned in such oaths, should be required, in order to their admission into the Bond for renewing our solemn Covenants, to attend conference with their respective Sessions; for signifying a satisfaction with the present judgment of the Synod; and a sense of the mistake they have hitherto, through inadvertency, been under, concerning such Burgess-oaths.”

It would have been ridiculously weak (and what never entered into the Synod’s mind), to have inferred likewise,—that they should be required to give up with their Burgess-privileges, or with the prosecution of their callings upon that ground.—For no sinfulness in the manner of admission to these privileges, could vitiate the privileges themselves: As any particular manner of admission must always
always be circumstantial; can never be essential to the privileges,—or to the calling which is prosecuted in virtue thereof. And being only a sinful circumstance of these privileges, it is necessarily separable from them; so that a requiring to confess the one can never infer, that a giving up with the other should be required also. It might as well be inferred, from a charge of sinfulness upon the manner of entering into a married state,—that the marriage should be dissolved: Yea that any lawful business should be abandoned, or that any piece of work should be broken in pieces; from a sinfulness in the manner of entering upon the one, or of executing the other.—And the Magistrates of Edinburgh (if not of other towns also) have readily admitted Burgesses of the Secession, without any concern in the Burgess-oath; neither the oath itself, nor one syllable about it, in their burgess-tickets.

But it was one of the prejudices, on the side of the Burgess-oath,—that brethren on the other side were supposed to mean an abolishing of burgess-privileges among those of the Secession. And, by the above article of the Decision, that prejudice was properly obviated.

Section II. Of the Synod’s Procedure toward the Decision, at several Meetings previous to that in which it was passed: With the Opposition made, at these Meetings.

I. Beside some general reasoning upon the Burgess-oath, when the overture concerning it was introduced to the fifth and last sederunt of the first meeting of the Synod; in consequence of which, it was referred to particular consideration at their next meeting: There was much reasoning upon the subject at this, and two meetings afterwards. As,

1st, At the first sederunt of the meeting in May 1745, the committee of overtures was appointed to ripen for the Synod—the matters to come before them: And after two sederunts spent, in reasoning upon the aforesaid overture,—other members likewise attending; the committee proposed, That the Synod should take this affair under parti-

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cular consideration at a private sederunt. Accordingly, at their third sederunt, they entered upon the affair; beginning with the first, or the religious clause of some Burgess-oaths: And as they continued their meeting for two weeks, having ten sederunts in all; other four of these were also spent in reasoning upon that clause.

At length the following state of a question was proposed, as comprehending both sides of the precedent debate, viz. "Whether the article concerning religion, in some Burgess-oaths, implies an approbation of the state of religion as authorized by the laws of the land that are in force; particularly the Revolution-settlement of religion, confirmed by the Union; and no more extensive Testimony to the settlement and profession of religion, than said is? Or is it to be understood of the Reformation that took place before the year 1638; and in general of the true religion, which is invariably the same in every period, in opposition to Popery and all false religion?"—But an overture for a delay, opposed to all this question, was carried by a vote: And thereupon Mr Gib entered a dissent, to which Mr Moncrieff and Mr Campbell adhered; as conceiving that this delay, in the circumstantiate case, did derogate from a due and consistent adherence to the Testimony already lifted up and avouched by the Synod.

2dly, Of five sederunts which the Synod had, at their meeting in September following,—two were mostly spent on this question, viz. "Whether the Synod should continue to sit next week, and proceed in the affair of the Burgess-oath; or delay it, till a pro-re-nata meeting in November?" Which last was carried by a vote. But Mr Moncrieff (adhered unto by Mr Thomas Mair, Mr Gib, Mr Clarkson, Mr Brown and Mr Campbell) did enter a dissent from this delay, for the reason before mentioned; and protested against it, as unwarrantably putting off the duty of renewing our solemn Covenants,—considering a special hazard, that the said pro-re-nata meeting might not take place: While the Rebellion raised by a son of the Popish Pretender, heading a Popish and malignant party in this land,—had then prevailed unto a breaking of our army.

3dly, The
3dly, The meeting of Synod in November 1745—was continued for two weeks, during which they held seven sederunts; and four of them were mostly spent upon the affair of the Burgess-oath. At the last of these, a new state of a question was proposed, _viz._ “Whether or not it be, in the present circumstances, agreeable to the word of God, and our received principles,—particularly to the principles adopted by this Synod in their Act and Testimony, and in their Act for renewing our Covenants (national and solemn League); especially for those in accession to this Synod, and holding the same Testimony with them,—to swear the religious clause in some Burgess-oaths?” But a motion for a delay, opposed also to this question, was carried by a vote: Whereupon Mr Moncrieff, Mr Gib and Mr Campbell, declared their adherence unto and renewed their former protest; for the reasons before mentioned.

II. The Synod had now held twenty-seven sederunts, at four different meetings; fifteen of which were wholly, and another (the last of their meeting in March) almost wholly spent in various other business before them, (as particularly set forth in their published proceedings): While two (in September) were mostly spent upon the affair of the Burgess-oath; yet without entering into the merits of it, as hath been shown. But nine of these sederunts (beside some general reasoning at the said sederunt in March), with two of the committee of overtures in May (which was, upon the matter, a committee of the whole House),—had been mostly spent in discussing the merits of that cause*. And the following things are observable, upon the whole.

1st, The reasoning at these nine sederunts, which were mostly very long, was carried on with very serious deliberation.——Beside two public fasts through the whole Secession, (both having a special eye to this important business before the Synod, but the last more especially respecting the Antichristian rebellion then on foot); there had been three fasts publicly observed by the members of the Synod, at their three last meetings: As also two private diets

*Such as are acquainted with the Writings on the other side, will see the reasons for being so particular about the sederunts of the Synod.
diets of prayer among them; and brethren had been at five different times employed this way, in the course of reasoning,—for divine light and direction.

2dly, A melancholy opposition was made; and gradually increased,—in the course of reasoning at these sederunts: To which the spending of so much time in long and tedious debates upon the subject, with the several delays,—was wholly owing.

Two Ministers were afterwards distinguished by censure, as the leaders in this opposition; which was begun by the one (an original member of the Associate Presbytery, yet alive), and warmly adopted by the other: And no more than other five Ministers were ever got to take part with them upon the merits of the cause, in defence of the Burgess-oath.—It was with signs of reluctance, that these two brethren submitted, at first, to the evident necessity of the Synod’s entering upon the affair; but they soon afterwards came the length of spurning against any further consideration of it,—yea of arguing that the Synod should not have meddled with it, and that they ought to drop it as a thing they had no business with: And so they, with the others concurring, rose to the managing of a most strenuous opposition.

But the generality of the Ministers, the majority by far at each of the three meetings, from the first opening of the affair,—evidenced a clearness on the same side of the controversy that was carried in the decision afterwards; evidently in a readiness, at each meeting, for a decision upon that side. However, the matter was still put off; through the singular method of the opposition.—As the opposing brethren could never see the remotest appearance of finding a majority on their side, they were always careful to keep their side of the controversy from the risqué of a vote: So that when a question was brought on at each meeting, their side of it was always for a simple delay till next meeting. At the same time, these delays were urged by arguing the inevitableness of a rupture in case of a decision,—even by tragical declamations about a breach: And by these means only, the majority were still brought to a delaying of the matter from one meeting to
to another; in the hope of gaining their brethren from such opposition. But as one brother (Mr Thomas Mair), clearly of the other side from them, did insist much for some of these delays; he at the same time declared that, if some further reasonings should be without the desired effect,—he would be obliged to vote for a decision according to his light.

3dly, When the opposition was once formed,—singular methods of argument were used, for maintaining and giving strength to it. The reasoning was carried on with extraneous discourses about former times,—or with strange abstractions, in most unnatural distinctions and refinements about the words true religion; according to the second side of the question which was proposed at the meeting in May. The scope of the whole was, to carry away from any proper regard to the word Presently in the religious clause; or to make it pass for once presently, instead of now presently: As it were to get the Synod brought, by a sort of fascination or revery, to imagine themselves living in the days of John Knox; and to decide accordingly.

But it is not to be supposed that men, otherwise sensible, would have ever entered into this way,—so as to lose themselves, very soon, in the maze of such unaccountable reasonings; considering the gross and palpable absurdity of attempting, at any rate, to reconcile the swearing of that religious clause with the condition of Seceders: If their entry into it had not been influenced by some prejudiced notion, quite foreign to the merits of the cause. And this was really the case.

The brother who began the opposition—had conceived a notion of the brother who first moved the affair of the Burgess-oath in the Associate Presbytery, (beside a deep umbrage well known to have been conceived against him, on an occasion of a personal nature, about three years before); as if he had some new scheme of anti-government principles to bring forth: Which it was supposed he would take occasion for, upon getting forward to the clause of civil allegiance in the Burgess-oath. And this notion concerning him was got impressed upon several others*; par-

particularly

*The Writer of this account was, for some time, one of the persons so impressed; merely upon the credit of the Author of that impression,—
particularly upon the brother who most warmly adopted the opposition: As it was shamefully insinuated afterwards, in their reasons of protest. The question moved about the Burgess-oath, was therefore exposed to a very unfavourable and suspicious entertainment, from the consideration of who was the mover: And it was reckoned necessary to withstand the motion, as to the first clause; for guarding against the chimerical danger of having anti-government-principles brought forth upon the second.—That the opposition has been no desperately persisted in, amidst all the absurdity of it, after the opposers came to have their characters and interests very much embarqued in that cause,—may from thence, in a great measure, be accounted for.

Section III. Of the Synod’s procedure to the Decision, at the Meeting in which it was passed; with the opposition then made.

I. The meeting of Synod in which the decision passed, began on Tuesday the 1st of April 1746. This meeting, being continued for two weeks, consisted of fourteen sederunts. Of these, the second was spent in a diet of prayer; four were spent upon the affair of the Burgess-oath,—about which brethren were twice employed in prayer, for divine light and direction: And the other nine sederunts (two of which were on the day after the decision passed) were spent upon various other business—it was not till their fifth sederunt, on the afternoon of

from the far better occasion which he had, of being acquainted with the brother suspected. But this impression was absolutely removed, at the meeting of the Associate Presbytery in September 1743; when the declaration and defence of their principles about the present Civil Government—did pass without a contradictory voice. Accordingly, next morning after the said meeting, he went to congratulate with the author of the said impression,—on the evidence then got, that there was no real foundation for it: But he was extremely surprised in finding that, after all, the notion was as strong in the author’s mind as ever. He then expressed a grieving apprehension of it, as an irremediable prejudice: And from that time entertained a fear of its finding some vent or other, unto a breaking of the unity and harmony which then subsisted in the Associate Presbytery.
of the third* day of their meeting, that they resumed the affair
of the Burgess-oath; after having unanimously agreed, at the
forenoon’s sederunt of that day,—“to continue together part of
next week, for the discussing of several pieces of business to
come before them.”

II. In the entry of this fifth sederunt, the members did
unanimously agree,—to abstain from any further reasoning
upon the merits of the cause; all being of the mind, that there
had been enough of this on former occasions. But some
brethren being much apprehensive, that the continuance of the
opposition was mostly, if not wholly owing to mistakes of
what was insisted for; it was suggested as a healing method, or
the properest way of removing these mistakes,—to examine
what overtures might be proposed on both sides, for
terminating the debate: And this method of procedure was
unanimously agreed upon. Several overtures were then
proposed accordingly, and reasoned upon at much length: The
result of all which was,—an unanimous agreement to resume
the consideration of these overtures, on the ensuing week; for
proceeding to some decision that might prevent a renewing of
the debate, to a retarding other business, at the next meeting.
And that agreement, for effecting this purpose,—was equally
gone into on both sides; not one proposed, or so much as
hinted the smallest inclination for any further delay.

The Synod had two other sederunts next day, and one in
the forenoon of Tuesday following,—on other business before
them. In the afternoon of that day, after some other business,
they resumed the consideration of the aforesaid overtures;
when some others also were proposed, for bringing the matter
to an issue: And after much reasoning on the subject at this
diet, as also in the second of these sederunts which were held
next day; they proceeded in the third of these sederunts, to that
decision which issued the affair,—and hath been exhibited.

III. There was but one overture proposed on the side of
the majority, or of those who disapproved a present swear-

*By an oversight in the first printed Proceedings, it was called
the second day.
of the religious clause among Seceders: And this overture was precisely in the same terms with the decision afterwards passed; as hath been before explained. It was proposed and insisted on by them at the fifth sederunt, on the first week; as also at the three sederunts when that business was in hand, on the week following. No other overture was proposed by them, first or last: Nor did any of them give the smallest hint or insinuation, in the beginning or all along,—as if they might have any other overture to propose; or that any lower sort of overture could satisfy them, for issuing the affair. Not one of them, first or last, did deal in any general way, so much as for a moment,—about being disposed for some healing overtures: But this one overture was immediately proposed; and this only was insisted on by them.

But there were four other overtures proposed by the opposing brethren, which they called *overtures of peace*; and of which it is proper to give some account. As,

1st, One of their overtures was,—“That the first clause of some Burgess-oaths might, for the sake of peace, be explained according to the original and obvious meaning and intent of the words themselves, in such a sense as might be adapted to the present Testimony; especially as Magistrates of burghs are the original framers and administrators of the said oath.” And this was their principal overture: Which turned wholly upon the mysterious point of looking wholly backward, to what was called the *original* meaning and intent of the words themselves, above an hundred and fifty years before,—with an utter disregard of the word *Presently*, in the oath; or making that word to mean, not the period which now is,—but the period of the reformation from Popery. Yet a person could not, in any consistency with the essential nature and design of the oath, swear it with any regard to a former period, more than if it had never existed before the moment of his swearing it. And it must have been a gross juggling,—if the Synod should have directed their people to take up any other meaning and intent of the words, than what must be reckoned the present imposer’s meaning and intent of them; coinciding with the present state of matters, in the profession and settlement of reli-

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Period III.  

Of the Synod’s Procedure in April 1746.  

2dly, Another of their overtures was,—for “a mutual forbearance of one another in the present question; as being one of these things which was never matter of Testimony in the Church of Scotland, and whereunto we never had attained.” As to the reason of this overture,—the matter of the present question (viz. a swearing of the religious clause in this period) could not have been a matter of Testimony in any former period; more than the year 1746 could have existed in any former period. And no wonder, that the Synod could not digest such a doctrine of mutual forbearance,—giving a toleration for a joint swearing of two oaths supposed to be contradictory, even in the general matter of religion. But, upon supposition of the Synod’s forbearing a present decision of the question,—these brethren would by no means agree to forbear, in the mean time, an admission of those engaged in such Burgess-oaths into the bond for renewing our Covenants; any more than if the Synod had passed sentence on their side: Though yet it was to remain a question, whether an engagement in such oaths was inconsistent with an entrance into the said Bond. It could not therefore appear, that the forbearance proposed was genuine or really mutual; or any way calculated for preserving peace, and preventing different practices.

3dly, Their next overture was,—“That for the sake of peace and to prevent different practices, any under our inspection, who are to enter Burgesses, be advised to take the Burgess-oath without the foresaid first clause; till the members of the Synod come to see more clearly, eye to eye, in this matter.” But such an advice would have implied the Synod’s allowance of the other clauses of these oaths, though they had not overtaken the consideration thereof. And this overture noway extended to the case of those who were already engaged in such Burgess-oaths. Nor would these brethren by any means grant,—that such as would not follow the advice of the overture should not, in the mean time, be admitted into the bond for renewing our Covenants.

4thly,
4thly. There was a further overture proposed, on that side, viz. an overture “of a new religious clause for these Burgess-oaths: And that Seceders, when occasion offered, should insist for having the oath administrated to them with this new clause; or otherwise, should refuse it altogether.” But if this meant any thing, it meant all that was contended for on the other side; as to finding fault with a swearing of the present religious clause. And such a peculiar overture served to shew, that the opposition had been long enough yielded unto; when the same, with some at least, turned out to such an absurd appearance.

IV. At the close of the second sederunt on Wednesday, the 9th of April 1746, (after much reasoning on the aforesaid overtures, in that and two preceding sederunts, as before mentioned); the following minute was agreed upon, without any contradiction, viz. “Resumed conference upon the affair of the first clause of some Burgess-oaths, particularly of the several overtures proposed for bringing that matter to an issue; and, after long reasoning upon the said overtures, the Synod agreed to come, at next sederunt, to a state of a question for terminating the debate.”

In the entry of that next sederunt, the same day,—the above minute was again read; and still acquiesced in, without the smallest demur. The Synod thus proceeded unanimously, toward the stating of a question; in conformity to the resolution of that minute: And, after some reasoning upon the state of a question,—the first overture, which was afterwards turned into a decision was insisted upon for one side of it. Then it was, that the brethren of the opposition began to flinch; while, to the great surprise of others, they would not venture any of their overtures for an opposite side of the question: But they proposed for that side, “Delay a decision till next meeting;” urging the delay in such a manner as at former meetings. The question was at length put, after prayer,—Approve the first overture, or delay in terms of the second; and it carried, approve the first overture: Wherefore the Synod did approve, and find accordingly; as in the decision before expressed.

V.
V. Five of the Ministers [Messrs Ralph Erskine, James Fisher, William Hutton, Henry Erskine, and John McCara,] with two of the Elders,—did immediately enter a verbal dissent from and protestation against the decision now made; with most heavy, but most groundless charges against the Synod and their decision,—as reasons of dissent: And craving liberty to give in further reasons to the Moderator and Clerk, against the first of July. At the same time, Mr James Mair gave in a declaration; bearing, that he was scrupled at and difficted with the decision now made: But more strongly professing difficulties, on the other hand, about the Burgess-oath in its religious clause.—The Synod, at their forenoon’s sederunt next day, appointed a committee for preparing answers to the reasons of dissent when given in.

VI. At this ensuing sederunt, these brethren brought forth a written form of their dissent and protestation: In which they laid this charge, among others, against the decision,—that it was “carried by a small majority of thirteen to nine; the one half of the constituent members not being present, when the decision of such an important question was passed.” But,

1st, It was not fact, that one half of the constituent members were not present.—For no Elders could be rationally called constituent members, but such as came up for being received unto and thus acquiring a seat in the Synod,—as properly commissioned by their Sessions for that purpose: And as only fourteen Elders came up on the first week of this meeting, with another on the second week; these, added to the twenty-eight Ministers then belonging to the Synod,—made the highest reckoning of constituent members, in number forty-three:—But thirty-seven of these, of whom twenty-three were Ministers, had been present on the first week; and twenty-six, twenty of them Ministers, were present on the second. After all, the number of constituent members, in regard to any particular meeting,—cannot, with any propriety, be extended beyond the number of those who actually attend it.—Moreover, the charge now laid against the Synod’s decision, from an alledged thinness of the meeting in which it passed,
passed, was extremely unreasonable and unfair; considering that,

1. The meeting on the first week was no less full of Ministers than any that had ever taken place,—yea fuller than any, except in March and on the first week of May the year before; and considerably more full of Elders, than any that had ever taken place on this affair: And it was wholly owing to the opposition of these brethren, that the affair was not then brought to an issue; or at least to a question.

2. The three Ministers and nine Elders who returned not on the second week, had the fullest advertisement that some decision then was to be looked for; by the express and unanimous agreement for this purpose, on the first week: While none of those on the side of the decision had given them, or any others,—the smallest ground to suppose, that any lower decision could satisfy them; every pretence to the contrary of this, being an atrocious calumny.

3. The meeting on the second week,—could not be justly pretended to be of any remarkable thinness; but was as full as could be well expected, all circumstances considered: While it was more full than three of five different meetings on this affair, which had taken place in as many different weeks the year before. Accordingly, when the agreement was made, at the sederunt immediately preceding that in which the decision passed,—“to come, at next sederunt, to a state of a question for terminating the debate;” no person moved any difficulty about this agreement, from an alledged thinness of the meeting.

4. At the sederunt in which the decision passed, none of these brethren opened a mouth about a thinness of the meeting: When they came to propose and insist for a new delay, none of them alleged a thinness of the meeting as a reason for this: It was not till next day, and in the written form of their dissent then brought forth,—that any such charge or quarrel was first started.

5. Whatever party they could have had any view of in a fuller meeting (particularly of Elders unacquainted with the cause), to be on their side for a new delay; yet any
alleged thinness of the meeting was wholly for their advantage, as to the merits of the cause: Seeing the generality had all along, at former meetings, appeared on a different side from them in that matter.

2dly, Though the first overture was carried, but by thirteen against nine,—this was by no means a division of the members upon the merits of the cause: Their side of the question, against that overture, having been only for a delay till next meeting. Hence it was that two members, not of their mind in the matter of the controversy, (though one of them professed difficulties as above),—concurred with the seven [protesters] in voting for a delay; while three were silent on the vote. But as one of the two who voted with them for a delay, and these other three,—did acquiesce in the decision when passed; and the Moderator’s acquiescence in it was well known: Therefore the division of all members present upon the merits of the cause, or upon the sentence itself,—was really of eighteen against seven; and, as to the Ministers, of fourteen against five.

And the seven protesting members had no reason to look for much more concurrence in their protest, at the fullest meeting of Synod which could be had: As remarkably appeared, at the ensuing meeting in September that year.—— Of thirty Ministers then belonging to the Synod, twenty-eight were present, (as the two then absent appeared afterwards on the side of the decision); and nineteen Elders were present, being more than had ever attended any former meeting. Yet, after all the diligence used by the five protesting Ministers (and one of the protesting Elders, the other not having belonged to that meeting), for promoting their cause; only other two Ministers, with other two Elders,—were got to declare an adherence to their protest: Wherefore the real division of that meeting, on the merits of the cause,—was of thirty-seven members against ten; and of twenty-one Ministers (beside two on the same side then absent) against seven.

VII. It was under much heaviness of spirit, that thirteen members found themselves obliged to vote for the first overture,—in the face of such unrelenting opposition; and even against a simple delay: While some of them,
who had gone in to several delays formerly, could not satisfy themselves to do so any longer. And they had a very urgent reason for proceeding, without any further delay; beside their having gained nothing upon the opposite brethren, but rather the contrary, by former delays: For some of these brethren had now explained their inclinations about covenanting-work, conform to what was afterwards laid in their protest; after such a manner as gave just ground to fear that, before another meeting of Synod,—even contrary methods of procedure, in that solemn work, might be on foot among the people. A present decision was therefore of peculiar necessity, as a proper mean for preventing such an woful posture of affairs; and for the Synod’s exoneration in that matter, whether it should prove successful or not.

Section IV. Of the Opposition made to the Synod’s Decision in the course of the year after the Meeting in which it was passed.

I. The protesting brethren exerted themselves, on the back of this meeting, for promoting the cause of their protest among the people: So that some of them went to their pulpits, with testimonies against the Synod on that subject. And their Reasons of protest, which were sent up as proposed, did run in a most unbecoming strain.—These Reasons were evidently made up of things quite foreign to the true state of the question: Introduced and intermixed with very great misrepresentations of facts, as to the course of the Synod’s procedure; such as differed from reality, not only in some particulars,—but even in the main scope, the state of the whole. And, particularly, their ninth Reason, on the head of mutual forbearance,—was of an evident tendency to impose upon some, to harden others; and to promote the present degeneracy among the professors of religion,—by throwing up a thick mist upon Presbyterian principles, and the whole work of bearing witness for Christ.

II. The committee appointed for preparing Answers to these Reasons, when given in, got not met,—till a few days
days before the next meeting of Synod in September 1746; and could not then finish the draught of Answers. At the third sederunt of this meeting, upon reading the minutes of the last concerning them,—the protesting brethren immediately desired, that their Reasons might be called for and recorded: Upon which it was told, that the draught of Answers was not finished. And the case of the opposition (beside some new strength which it acquired), came then to be turned into a very new channel. As,

1st, Some brethren expressed a great concern, to have an entering on the Reasons and Answers, if possible, prevented altogether: By the Synod’s endeavouring, in a way of conference with prayer, to have healing brought about; through a removal of some misunderstandings unto which, they conceived, the continuance of their brethrens opposition was owing. And this having been agreed unto, (on which these brethren dropt their desire about their Reasons); it was immediately entered upon. The conference then proceeded for a considerable time, mostly on the side of those who had proposed it: In which, particularly, they endeavoured to remove any mistakes concerning them; as if they had been disposed for refusing or shifting any thing that could be suitable,—in the matter of practical forbearance and patience, toward their brethren of a different judgment. But all this did noway satisfy them: And the Synod referred the consideration of holding further conference with prayer upon this subject, till next sederunt.

2dly, At the first sederunt next day, when the conference was a little further proceeded in,—the protesting brethren moved, and vehemently urged to have this question put to a vote, viz. Whether the foresaid decision of Synod should be a term of Ministerial and Christian communion; or, not? “But” (as minutes bear) “before the Synod proceeded to take in this motion, or enter upon reasoning concerning it, Mr Moncrieff protested against the taking it in or reasoning upon it, in regard he conceived the said motion had come in per faltum; and in regard our received principles are thereby called in question, as it would be materially a receding from them: Whereupon he took instruments. And he made

“the
“the following motion, to be a side to the said first motion, viz. *Lay aside this question, and proceed immediately to the business of the Synod; or, not?*” Hereupon long reasoning ensued: And then the previous question was put upon these two motions (after prayer by a brother for light and direction), as to which of them should be taken in; when it carried for the first.

These brethren then craved, that their question should be immediately put; insisting that it came of course to be so, upon the former vote after prayer, without any further reasoning to intervene. At this, some others expressed great surprise; as the former vote, in the very nature of it, had only determined that question to be taken in and reasoned upon: Wherefore they insisted upon their right to have further reasoning concerning it, before it should be put to a vote; notwithstanding how far the merits of it had been occasionally spoken to, in the reasoning before the former vote.—And thus the matter was delayed till the afternoon’s sederunt.

3dly, When the affair was resumed in the afternoon, the protesting brethren insisted with most resolute keenness for a vote upon their question; so that some of them told they would not go out of the house till they should have a vote upon it, though they should sit till so and so long next morning: And the reasoning was protracted till about three of the clock in the morning, before the matter came to any issue.

It was much insisted for, that they should explain their question; by laying it in some larger form: So as to distinguish, whether a negative upon it must extend to a determining,—that the Synod’s decision should not be a term of communion, notwithstanding whatever course of difference from and opposition to it in time coming. But they could not be prevailed upon to alter or add one word, as to the first form of their question. And though they would not positively refuse the widest meaning that could be put upon it, yet they would not offer to give any positive explication of it: Farther than as one of them owned, that it meant a material reversing of the former decision; so that it should only stand in the minutes as a mo-

...
nument of a Testimony, which the Synod had then thought fit to give.

There was also much reasoning against their capacity of being judges upon this question, while they were most evidently parties; as a vote on the question would just amount to a determining,—whether any account should be taken of them or others, for opposition to the quarreled decision: But they could not be prevailed with, to desist from acting as judges in the matter.

After the Synod had thus been long driven on by their strenuous insisting, through much perplexity and confusion,—and when the vote seemed to be just coming on; Mr Gib entered a protest against putting the question at all, as it stood,—or without having it laid in a proper explication, as had been insisted for: Which was adhered unto by Mr Clarkson and Mr Archibald, with Adam Wilson Elder from Dundee.

Hereupon there was a joint demand by members from all corners of the house, that this question should be put,—Proceed to putting the above question, or delay the same till next meeting? Immediately five of the brethren, and nine Elders, protested against putting this question; “as being a material declaration of the mind of the Synod,—that the act of last Synod, concerning the first clause of some Burgess-oaths, is a term of Ministerial and Christian communion.” The vote being then stated, and a brother being employed to pray for light and direction in the matter; these brethren withdrew abruptly before prayer: And the question being put, it easily carried delay. These brethren then returning,—they, with eleven Elders, dissented from and protested against the delay; while there were nearly fifty members present.

4thly, At this juncture Mr Ebenezer Erskine, who had been absent from the former meeting of Synod, saw meet to put the following question, viz. Whether the Synod would reverse their sentence about the religious clause of some Burgess-oaths; or, not? Which question he urged, from the consideration of the delay now made; “whereby” (as he said) “he apprehends the former act, concerning the first clause of some Burgess-oaths, stands as a term

“of
“of Ministerial and Christian communion, and it even strengthened by this deed.” But the Synod refusing to take this question, so abruptly put, into their consideration; he immediately gave in a declaration of adherence to the former protest against the decision,—for Reasons to be given in to the Moderator, against the 1st of February. In which he was adhered unto by Mr David Horn (who had been absent on the second week of the former meeting), and by two Elders. Moreover, Mr Ralph Erskine protested for “liberty of a more solemn and further testimony against the whole of the Synod’s conduct, concerning the question in debate, at this and former meetings; when he shall find cause:” In which he was adhered unto by other five Ministers and five Elders.

The Synod then appointed their committee, to have the draught of Answers to the Reasons of the former protest (and what reasons might be offered for the present adherence to it) in readiness against their next meeting; and they delayed calling for the Reasons till that time.

5thly, For illustrating what is above represented, or the state of matters in this meeting,—it is proper to make the following observations.

1. Of twenty-eight Ministers now attending, (two only being absent),—one had never been present at any former meeting, when the affair of Burgess-oaths was in hand; as two of them had been ordained since the last meeting: While, of nineteen Elders now attending, only five had ever been in the Synod before; and only three of these had ever been in any meeting before the last, when the said affair was under consideration,—and only two of them had been in the last meeting. And though no further adherence to the protest was now obtained, than as above; yet the pretence of so many new members, strangers to all former debates on the subject,—must have contributed to an embarrassment and unsteadiness of procedure, upon the new question which was so strenuously urged.

2. This question (Term of communion, or not?) had nothing in it of fairness; nothing of a fair opposition to the Synod’s decision about the religious clause of some Burgess-oaths, or of a fair dealing with the Synod in that matter. But the question was, in its nature, as a pit dug,
or as a snare laid for them: The general scope of it being, to
get the decision materially, though not formally abolished;
and, instead of a practical forbearance only with the opposers,—to obtain, in an underhand manner, a judicial
allowance of the opposition itself. Could the protesting
brethren have satisfied themselves, with any expressions of
brotherly forbearance and tenderness toward them; so as no
difference of sentiment on the subject should be allowed to
mar a full communion with their brethren,—nor a falling from
their protest be held necessary for maintaining such
communion: Every thing of this sort could have been easily
obtained by them, on that occasion. But nothing less would
satisfy, than a synodical allowance for whatever length they
could go of trampling down the said decision,—in the work of
solemn covenanting; so as communion should not be marred,
by dealing also in an oath contradictory to the oath of our
Covenants,—even when judged to be contradictory.

But the aforesaid question, notwithstanding all this
dreadful import and tendency of it,—carried a specious
appearance. It was calculated for diverting the attention,
altogether, from the merits of the cause; so as to fix it on the
subject of dutiful regard and affection to brethren otherwise
minded: And an aversion from any appearance of a
disrespectful or unbrotherly disposition, producing an
inclination for any thing that could be pretended as fair dealing
with their question,—had a good deal of influence on the
minds of members; toward a staggering and short-coming, in
their contendings against the question so violently pushed.

Thus,

3. Though the Synod was enabled, on this occasion, to
maintain an opposition to the course of the protesting brethren,
(and they took the Synod to be in a real opposition to their
question, as appears by what is above quoted from their
protests); yet, from the causes which have been mentioned,
y they came short of maintaining it in a proper manner.—While
the motion made by these brethren was utterly incompetent, or
could not consist with the proper business of the Synod; yet
only one member protested against taking it under
consideration,—and he countenanced it so far, as to offer an
opposite side to it for a

previous
Of the Opposition to the Synod’s Decision, Period III.

previous question: And all countenanced it so far, as to admit of and vote upon that previous question,—the majority for taking the motion under consideration; and they complied with a continuing of it in the minutes, by voting the delay of it till next meeting. These things were afterwards confessed by them, as sinful steps and compliances on that occasion.

III. In the interval betwixt this and the ensuing meeting, still a greater ado was made against the quarreled decision.—Sundry copies of the Reasons of protest were let go about, through different and distant corners, among Elders and others; in some cities, and most populous places of the country: So that people came to be impressed with strange prejudices; by the gross misrepresentations of the Synod’s method of procedure, contained in the papers of Reasons,—and industriously propagated otherwise. Moreover, a pamphlet was published by one of the protesting brethren, [called, The Lawfulness of the Religious Clause of some Burgess-oaths asserted]; tending to sink the readers into confusion and error upon the subject: And a pamphlet of the same tendency was published by another of them, [called, A Review of a Pamphlet (by a private hand) intitled. A Serious Enquiry into the Burgess-oaths of Edinburgh, Perth and Glasgow]; in which the Synod was treated, through the sides of the private author, with extraordinary rudeness and abuse.

Yet after all, the plea in behalf of a present swearing of the religious clause among Seceders, or against the Synod’s decision in itself considered,—was like to gain little ground among the people. And so far was it from any likelihood of gaining more ground in the Synod, that one of the protesting brethren came to express great remorse for his engagement in the protest; and he came up to the next meeting with a design of making a retractation: Though he was got to slip that opportunity of doing so; but did it on some occasion afterwards,—as he acknowledged at the bar of the Synod, in April 1748.

However, the case proved far otherwise; with regard to the covert and more plausible way of attacking the decision, in the new question about Term of Communion. Some other members of Synod came thus to be intangled:
And numbers of Elders and people, (who had formerly evidenced no difficulty about the quarrelled decision, except in a way of discouragement at the contention maintained in the Synod on that subject),—were brought to interest themselves in the cause of the protesting brethren, upon their new question; so that great animosities and alienations of spirit came thus to prevail.

All this was owing, in a great measure, to the impositions made on them by the foresaid Reasons of protest and pamphlets,—concerning the method of the Synod’s procedure. And it was much owing to personal attachments; from the eminent respect which belonged to some of the protesting brethren,—or that distinguished esteem and affection, in which they had very justly been held: While they were then considered by many, as just ready to be cast out of communion,—if their question should not be carried. Yet these on the other side were nowise inferior, as to such a valuation of them; (nor could the present Writer yield to any, in veneration and affection for these Fathers,—with whom he had lived in sweet familiarity for several years): But they found themselves obliged to sacrifice personal regards and heart-attachments, to what they judged incumbent upon them,—toward the Lord CHRIST, and the Testimony which they held.

**Section V. Of the Rupture of the Associate Synod.**

Their next meeting, in which that melancholy event now mentioned took place,—began on Tuesday the 7th of April, 1747: When, of thirty-two Ministers belonging to the Synod, twenty-nine were present; with twenty-four Elders*. And, in order to a distinct view of the memorable transactions which turned out to a rupture on this occasion,—it is proper that the following things be taken severally under consideration, viz.

*At the Rupture, in the night of April 9th,—the separating brethren kept the antecedent minutes of this meeting; wherefore the Synod had not proper access, afterwards, to know the precise number of Elders present. It had been supposed, in publications on the Synod’s side,—that they were about thirty: But, according to the most credible account afterwards published on the other side, (where the case was best known)—they amounted, at most, only to twenty-four; this being the account given by Mr Ralph Erskine.
in Synod, on the 8th and 9th days of April 1747; the Resolution carried on the 8th; the Resolution carried on the 9th; the manner in which these Resolutions were carried; with the manner of contending against these Resolutions.

Article I. Of the Proceedings in Synod, on the 8th and 9th days of April 1747.

I. At the afternoon-sederunt, on the 8th,—the Synod agreed to resume the business depending in their minutes, upon the subject of their decision about the religious clause of some Burgess-oaths. Hereupon it was moved, that they should proceed according to due order,—in calling for the Reasons of protest against the said decision, with the Answers to these Reasons; for having them read and considered: And it was represented, by the committee appointed for preparing these answers,—that the draught of them was in readiness.

Immediately, the protesting brethren renewed their former question, about the said decision being a term of communion; but in this new and larger form, viz. “Whether the decision anent the religious clause in some Burgess-oaths, passed by this Synod in April 1746, shall now or afterwards be made a term of Ministerial and Christian communion; ay and until the making of the same to be so shall be referred, by way of overture, unto Presbyteries and Kirk-sessions, in order to their giving their judgment thereanent: That so there may, in the mean time, be a friendly dealing among the members of this Synod with one another, in a way of conference and prayer; in order to their coming, through the Lord’s pity, to see eye to eye in the matter of the said religious clause:—Or, not?”

When they had long insisted for a vote upon the above question, till very late; it was with difficulty obtained,—that this other question should be opposed thereto, for a previous question, viz. “Proceed to call for the Reasons of protest, and the Answers thereto; for having them read and considered: Or, not?” And the previous question being put, as to which of these two questions should be voted,
voted; it carried for the first to be so,—by twenty-nine votes, against twenty-two.

From this resolution, Mr William Campbell entered a DISSENT: And Mr Thomas Mair, with concurrence of Mr Alexander Moncrieff, adhered to his dissent; craving that the door might be open at next sederunt, for carrying this Testimony farther as they should see cause:—And so the matter rested, for that night.

II. In the entry of the forenoon-sederunt, next day, when the aforesaid question was resumed by the protesting brethren,—for being put to a vote, according to the former resolution; Mr Thomas Mair declared his adherence to his former dissent from that resolution,—craving liberty still, to carry this Testimony farther as he should see cause: To all which an adherence was declared,—by Messrs James Thomson, Alexander Moncrieff, Adam Gib, Andrew Clarkson, James Scot, George Brown, William Campbell, John Whyte, George Murray, Robert Archibald, and William Mair at Muckhart; with ten Elders.

After this, there was much obstinate insisting by the protesting brethren,—for a vote upon their question: And the matter being put off till the day was near spent, by reasonings in opposition to their course; the following PROTESTATION was then made, viz. “Whereas the Reverend Synod did yesternight resolve by a vote, that instead of proceeding to call for the Reasons of protestation against their sentence in April 1746, about a religious clause of some Burgess-oaths, with the Answers to said Reasons,—for being read and considered; they would proceed unto a vote upon the following question” (as before expressed);—“And whereas the putting the foresaid question to a vote is still, and at great length, insisted for, according to the resolution yesternight: I Adam Gib, Minister of the Gospel in the Associate Congregation at Edinburgh, do hereby, in mine own name, and in the name of all in this Synod who shall herein adhere unto me, PROTEST against putting the foresaid question to a vote;—and that it ought to be thrown simpliciter out of the minutes, with all that has passed thereupon; that so the Synod may proceed regularly

“in
Proceedings on the 8th and 9th April 1747.

Period III.

“in their proper business:—Because this question was irregularly thrust in upon the Synod at first, and has been all along irregularly pushed; unto the turning them aside from their proper business and duty:  And because the question proceeds upon a resolution of yesternight, suppressing proper light about the subject of the question; to be had from a consideration of the above-mentioned Reasons and Answers: And because the question is laid and calculate for imposing upon and perverting the judgment of members; seeing the manifest scope thereof, as laid and insisted upon, is to set the names and pleasure of men—in the room of truth and duty upon this affair:  And because this question is for introducing a sinful and dangerous innovation,—of subjecting the lawful decision of Synod, upon a controversy of faith and case of conscience, unto the consultation of inferior judicatories; particularly Kirk-Sessions:  And because an affirmative* upon this question must run upon a toleration-scheme, in direct opposition to the Lord’s word and Presbyterian principles,—by judicially allowing, at least for a time, the swearing contradictory oaths; one homologating all the public defections and corruptions of the day, which we testify against,—and the other condemning all these, as grounds of the Lord’s controversy to be testified against:—With other reasons that may be added in due time.  And protesting for liberty to enlarge upon the foresaid with other reasons, as I shall find myself in duty and conscience obliged; I hereupon take instruments.”

Unto this protestation, all the Ministers above-mentioned (except Mr Scot and Mr William Mair) declared an adherence; all thereupon taking instruments.  And after some further reasoning, till about seven of the clock at night,—the Synod adjourned for about an hour, the urged vote being still put off; about eight hours having been now spent, in these contendings against it.

III. When the Synod was again met, betwixt the hours of eight and nine of the clock at night, such contendings took place as in the preceding sederunt; and were carried on for several hours.——Some members who were

*This is explained in the next note but one.
not otherwise interfering in the debate, insisted for a delay till
next meeting; among whom was the Moderator, Mr James
Mair. And though some of the protesters once signified, that
they could be brought to yield to a delay; yet this was upon an
express condition, that there should be an agreement in a
peremptory determination,—to have their question actually
voted, before any other business, at next meeting; which these
on the other side could by no means agree unto: Wherefore
they resumed an unrelenting stiffness, for having their question
voted forthwith.

In the progress of the debate, a Minister on the other side
represented to them,—that their driving such a course would
necessarily produce a rupture: But one of them repelled this,
by arguing that their brethren could not be in earnest in such a
view. He then gave in the following PROTESTATION, viz.
“Whereas, notwithstanding of protestation regularly entered to
the contrary, the Reverend Synod is going on to a vote upon
this question,” (as before expressed); “I Alexander Moncrieff,
Minister of the Gospel at Abernethy, do, in mine own name,
and in the name of all who shall herein adhere unto me,
PROTEST,—that this meeting is not, nor ought to be held and
reputed a due and lawfully constituted meeting of the Associate
Synod IN THIS STEP: Because they are proceeding upon a
resolution of yesternight, which suppresses proper light upon
the subject of the question,—while many members were never
present at any judicial examination thereof; and some have
been complaining, that they are precluded from necessary
acquaintance therewith: And because, notwithstanding of
much insisting to the contrary,—the members protesting
against the sentence of the Synod in April 1746, who are
necessarily and directly parties upon the question, are
sustaining themselves judges for voting in it:—And protesting
for liberty to enlarge the above Reasons, and to carry on this
Testimony as I shall find myself in duty and conscience
obliged; I hereupon take instruments.” And unto this
protestation an adherence was immediately declared,—by the
other eleven Ministers who had dissented in the entry of the
forenoon-sederunt, and

by

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by Mr Patrick Matthew; as also by ten Elders, (another Elder who had been concurring on the same side, being then retired for a little through indisposition): Upon which all of them took instruments.

Yet still, the protesters violently urged for a vote upon their question: In the face of the Moderator’s craving a delay; and of several members, who had insisted for this, causing their desire of it to be marked in the minutes.—Some of them required the Moderator, once and again, to call, or order the calling of the roll; but he made no reply. They likewise once and again required Mr William Hutton, the Clerk pro tempore,* to call the roll; but he, though one of the protesters, held down his head upon the table,—and made no reply. Then one of them (Mr John McCara) did, at his own hand, take up and call the roll; and another of them (Mr Henry Erskine) did, at his own hand, mark the votes.

None of the thirteen Ministers and ten Elders, who were engaged in the protestation made a little before, could consistently meddle in such a vote. Nor did any open a mouth at the calling of the roll, except those who voted along with and in favours of the protesting brethren: These voters being, in all, nine Ministers,—and eleven Elders; of whom six Ministers and one Elder, (one of the protesting Ministers, Mr Hutton, being then silent),—were directly parties in the cause. Thus it was that these twenty voters, and but thirteen of them legal voters,—pretended to carry a deed of Synod; against twenty-three, who were making the most solemn opposition to their course: As these were then standing under the banner of a protestation against putting their question at all; and against the present meeting being reputed a due and lawfully constituted meeting of the Associate Synod, in that step.

Immediately when matters were come to this pass, in a chaos of absurdity and confusion; the Moderator of the former meeting, who had opened the present meeting of Synod, (the present Moderator having now ceased from acting as such),—did read out the following DECLARATION—

*The ordinary Clerk was detained from this meeting by indisposition; but attended afterwards.
TION and PROTESTATION, viz. “Whereas this meeting of Synod have now passed a vote, and made a resolution upon the affirmative* of that question which has been insisted upon; in opposition to a proceeding unto the Reasons of Protest against the sentence of Synod in April 1746, with the Answers to said Reasons: And considering the two protestations which have been entered this day, concerning that affair: And considering that, by the foresaid step, this meeting of Synod have materially dropt the whole Testimony among their hands; allowing of, at least for a time, a material abjuration thereof: And considering that, beside a considerable number of Elders, the majority of Ministers in this meeting,—who are the proper judges in a controversy of faith and case of conscience, and who could be judges in the present controversy,—have been all along, at this meeting, contending for the proper business and duty of the Synod; in opposition to the contrary torrent:—Therefore I Thomas Mair, Minister of the Gospel at Orwel, do hereby DECLARE and PROTEST,—That the lawful authority and power of the Associate Synod is DEVOLVED upon, and must LIE in a constitute meeting of the foresaid members, Ministers and Elders; together with any other members who shall cleave unto them, in a way of confessing what sinful steps and compliances they have fallen into upon this occasion: As likewise I DECLARE and PROTEST, That the foresaid members ought, in duty to the Lord and his heritage,—to take up and exercise the authority and power of the Associate Synod, lawfully and fully devolved upon them as above; and, for this end, to meet tomorrow at ten of the clock forenoon, in Mr Gib's house,—that they may regularly enter upon and proceed in the business of the Synod.”

Upon reading out the above Declaration and Protestation,—Mr Thomas Mair, with the other twelve Ministers

*The Resolution now made upon the question, is called an affirmative: Because, though it has a negative sound (not term of communion, etc), it is so absurd as to be affirmative in all its sense; affirming that material overthrow of the decision 1746, as also that innovation of the reference,—which were proposed by the protesters in their question.
and ten Elders, immediately withdrew. And the present Moderator withdrew along with them; nor did he return to the protesters and their party, that night.—Such was the RUPTURE to which the protesters got matters most violently driven on; issuing about two of the clock in the morning.

Article II. Of the Resolution carried in the Synod, on the 8th April 1747.

It has been represented that, on the day mentioned, a Resolution was carried in the Synod,—for proceeding to a vote upon the question then urged by the protesting brethren; [with regard to the Synod’s decision about the religious clause of some Burgess-oaths, its being made a term of Ministerial and Christian communion,—till such a reference of it should be made and take effect, as their question proposed]: In place of, and in opposition to a calling for the Reasons of Protest,—with the Answers thereto; for having them read and considered. And it is proper to observe some things, more particularly than in the last article,—about the nature of this Resolution.

I. This was a sinful Resolution, as the power claimed by it was very unjust. —It was competent for the Synod, to review their former decision about that religious clause; and, if they should find any good reason for doing so, formally to reverse it.—But they could have no just power, in leaving it formally standing, to make any new decision against it; by which it should be materially reversed, in rendering it of no effect: Or to tolerate, among their people, a present swearing of the said religious clause, while found by them to be contradictory to the bond for renewing our Covenants,—and so to be a renouncing of the Secession-Testimony, as avouched in that bond; at the same time tolerating a joint admission of them, by such Ministers as pleased, into the solemn oath of the said Bond. Yet such a power was claimed, by adopting the aforesaid question.

II. This was a sinful Resolution, as the question preferred by it was very unfair. It was very unfair, with re-
Period III. Of the Resolution made on 8th April 1747.

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gard to the decision which it struck at: By laying the said
decision open to a being materially reversed, in rendering it of
no effect; while yet, according to the obvious nature of the
question, it did not suffer the merits of the cause to be fairly on
the field, as to whether the decision was right or wrong,—thus
bringing it on to be condemned in the dark. And it was very
unfair, with regard to the members of the Synod,—in being
calculated for imposing upon them: By shifting any such fair
and proper question about the merits of decision,—and
attacking it indirectly, by a secret or covert thrust; under a
deceitful colour of due tenderness and regard to brethren
otherwise minded,—thus practising upon their affections,
instead of dealing honestly with their understandings.

III. This was a sinful Resolution as the preference given
by it was very injurious; in preferring the question about term
of communion, to the question about calling for and
considering the Reasons and Answers.—This was very
injurious, with regard to the decision struck at; by refusing,
excluding and suppressing proper and necessary light upon the
subject of the question,—to be had from proceeding upon the
Reasons and Answers: While this was the more necessary,
considering the strange prejudices among many against that
decision; produced by copies of the Reasons already spread
abroad, as also by pamphlets to the same purpose. And it was
very injurious, with regard to the members of the Synod; while
(as was very well known) not one half of these now present,
had ever been present at any former debate about the religious
clause,—so as to be capable of voting upon the present
question with understanding: And several Elders were
complaining of being precluded, by this Resolution, from
proper acquaintance with the cause; yea some of them craved a
hearing of the Reasons and Answers, as being utterly
unacquainted with the subject of the question now resolved
upon,—that they never so much as saw, or heard read, the
decision struck at by the said question.

ARTI-
Article III. Of the Resolution carried in the Synod, on the 9th of April 1747.

The Resolution now mentioned was in the following terms, viz. “That the decision anent the religious clause in some Burgess-oaths, passed by this Synod in April 1746, shall not now or afterwards be made a term of Ministerial and Christian communion; ay and until the making of the same to be so shall be referred, by way of overture, unto Presbyteries and Kirk-sessions, in order to their giving their judgment thereanent: That so there may, in the mean time, be a friendly dealing among the members of this Synod with one another, in a way of conference and prayer; in order to their coming, through the Lord’s pity, to see eye to eye in the matter of the said religious clause.” Now,

I. A resolving that the aforesaid decision should not, for the present, be a term of Ministerial and Christian communion,—was plainly a determining, that it should be of no present effect; particularly with regard to the work of solemn covenanting: Or that persons engaged in the oath of the religious clause, might be admitted also into the oath of the Bond for renewing our solemn Covenants,—without any regard to the rule laid down in the said decision, or without moving any objection about their engagement in the other oath; so as Ministers should be nowise found fault with, for admitting them in this manner. Yea, the Resolution was plainly, in general,—a judicial toleration or allowance, for a continued swearing of the religious clause, and the oath of renewing our Covenants,—promiscuously and conjunctly; neither Ministers nor people to be reckoned offenders, in this method of procedure,—to any marring of communion upon that account: Being left wholly at freedom, for carrying on covenanting-work—in a way of absolute trampling upon the aforesaid decision of Synod; or as if it had never been.

But, according to this decision, these were contradictory oaths; even as to the whole affair of a religious profession: The one being an oath of communion with the established Church, in the profession of religion,—upon
the matter *abjuring* the whole Secession-Testimony, as such; and the other being an oath by which this Testimony is most solemnly *avouched*. The Resolution was therefore a judicial toleration or allowance for contradictory oaths, in that most momentous affair; even for a conjunct abjuring and avouching of the whole Secession-Testimony.

Moreover, the decision, which was thus materially reversed,—was, at the same time, professedly and formally left standing: For the Resolution expressly considers and acknowledges it as a decision of Synod, still continuing to be a synodical deed. Wherefore that Resolution turned out to this dreadful inconsistency: Of the Synod still avowing, by their decision still left a standing deed,—that a present swearing of the religious clause, by Seceders, was a material renunciation of the Secession-Testimony, particularly of the Bond for renewing our Covenants; and yet the same Synod, at the same time, allowing that renunciation to go on,—in conjunction with the oath of the Bond: That thus, in carrying on covenanting-work,—a known and acknowledged renunciation thereof by oath might, at the same time, be permitted and practiced*!

II. The reference designed by this Resolution, unto Presbyteries and Kirk-sessions,—was a matter of complicated iniquity and disorder. For,

1st, It was here supposed, as to the decision of Synod,—that its being *made* or *not made* a term of communion, was a thing hitherto undetermined; still lying open to be referred,

*It could be no excuse for the Protesters,—that they were known to be, in their judgment, against the decision; as if they were not chargeable with the dreadful inconsistency here mentioned, because they did not believe or acknowledge what the decision affirmed to be the case.—For it was by their very question, pushed by them into a Resolution, that the decision was still reserved as a standing deed. And seeing this Resolution proceeded upon their getting their Reasons of Protest, with the Answers thereto, excluded from a hearing; their Protests and Reasons being thus laid aside, from being made any further account of: They were thenceforth to be constructed of in the matter, not according to these,—but according to the Resolution which they now got made; in which the decision of Synod, about the religious clause of some Burgess-oaths, was still *professedly* by them left standing.*
referred, by way of overture, for inferior judicatories to judge upon it: Whereas the decision itself, in its very nature, had already determined the case; that a walking contrary thereto, or a swearing in a general inconsistency with the Secession-cause and covenanting-work,—could not consist with a maintenance of communion in that cause and work. And the decision itself was thus to be laid open to the consultation of inferior judicatories; seeing the whole effect of it, and therefore the whole matter of it, was to be so,—only with a most inconsistent reservation of its form.

2dly, As the decision of the Synod was a ministerial determining of a controversy of faith and case of conscience; so, according to our Confession of Faith, it was to be received by inferior judicatories with reverence and submission,—instead of having all effect of it subjected to their judgment: It was to be so received, if consonant to the word of God. And if it was not consonant thereto, the only proper course must have been,—to have had it fairly remonstrated against, for being reversed: While a subjecting of it to the consultation of inferior judicatories, as already become and continuing to be a synodical deed,—was contrary to all scriptural or rational view of presbyterian authority, government and subordination.

3dly, This Resolution was for subjecting the decision of Synod on a doctrinal point, (whether or not such a thing should be believed to be sinful and unsafe for the conscience),—to the consultation and judgment of Kirk-sessions; made up of office-bearers to whom the Lord Jesus never committed the key of doctrine, but only the keys of government and discipline. And though these keys are to be exercised by them, in cognoscing upon or regulating the behaviour of Church-members,—with regard to matters of truth and error, sin and duty; so far as the doctrinal questions about such matters are already determined, in the public standards and constitutions of the Church: Yet to have a doctrinal question,—about what is truth or error, sin or duty; to have this subjected to their judgment and determination, must be subversive of all scriptural distinction among office-bearers in the Church,—and
of all order or government that any Church ever acknowledged or practised.

4thly. Though this Resolution determined, that the matter should be referred to Presbyteries and Kirk-sessions,—it did not actually make the reference, or determine when it should be actually made; nor did it limit any time, for having their judgment upon that reference brought up to the Synod: And, after all, the matter was to depend on the members coming to a state of unanimity upon the subject,—seeing eye to eye; while the protesters had plainly enough signified, that no such thing was ever to be expected,—on the side of the decision. Wherefore, the Resolution was evidently a sham-method,—for getting the decision finally abolished as to all effect; while yet preserved in all its import, as a Synodical judgment and determination.

5thly. This Resolution was proposed and made, as a compliance with some acts of assembly about novations; which acts were insisted upon with high parade, in the technical or military stile of Barrier acts. But what was the novation in the present case,—to be referred unto Presbyteries and Kirk-sessions, in consequence of these acts? It was even the novation of determining, that the Secession-Testimony should be still maintained, particularly as to covenanting work,—in opposition to an oath materially renouncing the whole; while the decision struck at did even bear no appearance of introducing any new point of Testimony, distinct from a maintenance of the Testimony already received: So that Presbyteries and Kirk-sessions were to give their judgment, whether or not the Secession-Testimony should be honestly maintained and walked up to, any longer! But what an outrage must it be, upon both reason and religion, to call this a novation; or to pretend any applicableness of the aforesaid acts to such a case? And what an extravagance was it, of abuse and imposition,—to represent the opposers of this reference as turning Popish, upon the article of implicit faith and blind obedience; because they were against referring to the consultation of inferior judicatories, and even of the dissuasive body,—the terms upon which they might have freedom
freedom to admit persons into the Bond for renewing our Covenants: Yea, whether their people should any longer comply with our Lord’s command,—*Hold that fast which thou hast!*

Upon the whole, the Resolution now considered did amount to nothing less than was charged upon it; even a material dropping of the whole Testimony for reformation, as then among the hands of the Associate Synod,—while giving up with any open, faithful and consistent maintenance of the same.

**Article IV. Of the Manner in which, and the Effect unto which the two Resolutions were carried.**

I. An account has been given, of the obstinacy and violence with which the protesting brethren pushed these Resolutions upon their question; through a course of reasoning, dissenting, and protesting to the contrary,—in three sederunts, of many hours. It remains to be observed, upon this head,—that while a hearing of the Reasons and Answers was still urged as necessary for casting light upon the subject of the question; at length one of them, in the name of the rest, did indeed propose to yield unto a previous reading of these: But it was only upon a condition which could not be granted; that there should first be an express agreement,—to have their question voted immediately after the reading, before opening a mouth upon the Reasons and Answers when read.—And so they persisted in urging their question, to an excluding of all other causes (except one, with difficulty got in at the forenoon sederunt on *April* 8th); though various parties were attending, some of them from remote places of this country,—and others from *Ireland.*

II. A very deceitful method was used by them, for getting their Resolutions carried; in dealing with the passions of members, to a superseding all exercise of their judgment upon the merits of the cause. When the previous question was just going to be put, which issued in the first Resolution on the 8th of *April*; one of them, as a preparative for the vote, advertised all present,—that a having

them
them brought to the bar and excommunicated, or deposed, would necessarily be the consequence of proceeding to the Reasons and Answers.—And matters were driven forward to the second Resolution, next day, in the same manner. Great noise was made about depositions and excommunications; as if the Resolution pushed for had amounted to no more, than a restraining from procedure to these censures against them: So that the matter of truth and duty, as to the decision struck at, was entirely dissembled; while the names and pleasure of men were thrust into the place thereof,—the whole matter being dressed up, as only a point of due tenderness and regard to fathers and brethren.

III. The protesting brethren, all along, sustained themselves judges in the cause,—and violently acted as such; over the belly of much reasoning, and of most solemn protestation to the contrary: Though they were most evidently parties in the whole affair. Had the question turned upon the merits of the cause,—as to whether the decision which they had protested against was right or wrong, whether or not it should be reversed; they could not have been parties upon that question*.—But the case was quite otherwise, as to the question which they now urged and voted

*It is a gross mistake, to suppose,—that their being protestors would have made them parties, in a question about reviewing and reversing the decision protested against; though it made them parties in the present question, about their own protesting against the same.——
It is not competent to alledge any other sort of partiality against persons, in religious matters; except that of their being parties where their own personal cause is the matter in question. And no manner or degree of previous appearance upon one side of a public cause in the Church, can lay persons aside from being judges in that cause,—as if their former siding of themselves upon it made it their personal cause, and so made them parties. For, as was observed in the famous Synod of Dort, (against the Remonstrants or Arminians,—who insisted that such as had been formerly managing all manner of opposition to them on the controverted points, should not be admitted for judges in these points: Sess. 29.): “Truth is the common treasure of the Church, nor can it by any means become the private property of individual persons; it is the public cause of God and the Church, not any one’s personal cause, that is debated in the Synods.”—And indeed any other view of the matter would run at length into a gross absurdity; of leaving none to be proper judges in the cause of God and the Church, but persons under the wicked and detestable character of neutrals in that cause.
voted upon; whether or not the decision which they protested against should be a term of communion? For a vote upon this question (and that by their own acknowledgment, in the noise made by them about depositions and excommunications), was just to be a determining,—whether or not the protesters against the decision (and others who might concur with them) should be reckoned offenders, or called to any account,—for their past or future opposition to the said decision; or whether communion should be maintained with them, in the way of tolerating all that opposition? The cause in hand was therefore directly and immediately, their own personal cause: And their assuming to be judges in it, while they were altogether parties, (as they were likeways beyond all controversy, in the previous question,—about whether the Answers to their Reasons of protest should get a hearing); this did manifestly strike against all rule, order and equity in the court,—unhinging the constitution of it, and subverting its very nature.

Yet their assuming, most iniquously, to be judges in the cause,—was the very thing to which all the dismal scene that followed was owing. For though they got not a majority, themselves included, upon the second resolution; yet thus they got a majority on the first: Whereas, if the eight protesters had lien aside, as being directly parties,—which would have reduced the twenty-nine voters for that resolution to twenty-one; the twenty-two on the other side would have carried, for proceeding upon the Reasons and Answers.

IV. It is proper to give a more particular account than in the first Article, of the manner in which the second Resolution was carried; for a further evidence of its nullity.

As hath been observed,—when the last vote was driven, and in a way of most unparalleled disorder; the seven protesters (six Ministers and one Elder) who voted, though nowise legal voters,—had only the concurrence of other three Ministers, with ten Elders, in their vote. Now, of these three Ministers, one had never been in the Synod before,—as another had never been present at any judicial examination
examination of the subject in question; which was the case also with the Elders: So that twelve of these thirteen who concurred with the protesters, though they were legal voters, could not be said to vote legally; because they voted blindly, or without any proper knowledge of the subject voted upon:—While the case was vastly different, with the Elders on the other side; for nothing could be more proper and competent, than for them to contend against bringing on a vote,—in the way of refusing to let them know the subject of it.

But though all the twenty had been legal voters, and voting legally; this could not salve the Resolution from a charge of absolute nullity, as being nowise a synodical deed. For it was manifestly essential to the nature and constitution of the Court, that it should then be reckoned of according to the majority of acting members in the cause: And the majority of these, twenty-three against twenty, were acting on the other side,—in the most absolute and solemn manner.

Neither was this all. For the opposers of the Resolution were not only the majority of acting members, on that occasion: but they were also the majority of all members then present, who had any title to act in that affair.—Fifty-three members in all, belonged to this meeting of Synod. Deducing the eight protesters, who were parties,—and the Moderator, who has no vote but when it comes to a casting vote; as also one Elder, who had been concurring all along in the opposition, (as he continued to do next day),,—but had then gone out, as indisposed: There remained but forty-three members, who had any title to act in this cause; of whom twenty-three, (twenty-four, if that Elder had not been obliged to retire),,—were managing a most downright opposition, at the time of the vote.

V. Yet after all, the protesters and their party still claimed the character of the Associate Synod: And the sole ground of their claim was, their way of reckoning the division of the members upon this cause; reckoning that they had thirty, against twenty-three.—In order to make up this number on their side, the Moderator must be included,—though he then declined acting as Moderator,
and immediately left them for that night; as also the aforesaid absent Elder, falsely supposed to be on their side. Yet, after adding these two to the twenty voters, they were still the minority: And their only way of making up the number thirty, was this; that they reckoned over to their side,—eight members (six Ministers and two Elders), who had been silent and non liquet at the vote. And indeed, if they had been the majority otherwise, it came of course,—that these silent members should have been so reckoned. But it would make a full end of a Court, as to all its form,—all order and judgment in it; if silent members were allowed a power of turning the scale, after a cause comes to an issue,—by siding with the minority.

However, as these silent members did then continue with the twenty voters,—in an appearance of siding with them; though this was manifestly subversive of the constitution of the Court: Hereby a prevailing party, as to number,—was most iniquiously combined, at that juncture, on the side of the voted Resolution. But this number, this prevailing party, could not be the Associate Synod; while their combination, in the present case, was utterly inconsistent with its nature.

And what was the effect of the whole?——By the Resolutions now carried, (exercising in the second, that power which was claimed in the first); the Secession-Testimony was materially dropt, as it were hurled into a grave. And by the manner of carrying these Resolutions, as above represented,—the whole order of the Court was overturned, and its constitution unhinged: So that the voters, and their party, did thus throw themselves out of the original Associate Synod; throwing themselves into a very new sort of constitution, such as cannot be supposed to have ever had a parallel in the Christian Church.

For any synodical constitution which they could now claim, was only such as admitted of the monstrous things following:——That the decrees of Synods and Councils, in controversies of faith and cases of conscience, may be thrown loose unto the consultation of inferior judicatories; particularly
particularly of Kirk-sessions: That Seceders may be judicially
tolerated to swear an oath,—which is, at the same time,
judicially declared to stand in a general contradiction to the
present Testimony; and to the oath of the Bond for renewing
our Covenants: That a decision may be made in a cause, of
whatever importance, before allowing any fair and necessary
opening of it: That parties may, in a violent manner, sustain
themselves judges in their own personal cause: And that a
minority in a Court, even parties included,—may carry a
decision, by their ultronous vote, without either Moderator or
Clerk acting in the case; even against the most solemn
protestation of the majority.

Article V. Of the Manner of contending against the two
Resolutions.

I. The thirteen Ministers afore-mentioned, when contending
against the first Resolution, April 8th,—were in a state of
much discouragement and confusion; from the violence with
which the matter was pushed: And they did not then
sufficiently advert to the full import and tendency of what was
pushed for. Hence it was, that particular failings and short-
comings then took place, in their manner of contending.—
They so far countenanced the question urged by the protesting
brethren, that they opposed another to it for a previous vote,—
and accordingly voted upon the previous question: And as no
further Testimony was then given against the first Resolution,
than by a dissent; only three of them then concurred in that
dissent: And though there was much reasoning before this
Resolution, against the parties being allowed to vote as judges;
yet no Testimony was then given against it, by either dissent or
protest. Moreover, one of these who had not adhered to the
dissent on the 8th,—neglected an adherence to it next day:
And he, with another of them, neglected an adherence to the
first protestation then made.—These things were afterwards
acknowledged by them, as sinful steps and compliances on
that occasion.

II. Beside
II. Beside what has been formerly represented, as to the manner of their long contendings on April 9th; some other things are to be considered.——They did then plead and insist, at both sederunts; that the quarreled decision, instead of the covered and deceitful attack made upon it by the question then urged, should be brought to an open review,—in order to a question, about whether or not it should be reversed; at the same time signifying, that they could not consider the protesters as parties upon that question: But such open dealing in the matter was utterly refused. They also made repeated declarations,—that none of them had the smallest notion of having the quarreled decision made a term of communion; more than any decision, resolving a case of conscience about sin and duty, must necessarily be: But no account was made of this, for stopping the career.

III. The dismal pass that matters were brought unto by the second Resolution, did necessarily shut them up to the course then taken by them; without leaving any other imaginable course for an alternative, consistently with truth and duty.——They were, in that juncture, the only remaining members of the Associate Synod; all the rest having then thrown themselves out of it, into a very opposite and unparalleled constitution. And, as the Secession-Testimony was then solely remaining among their hands; they were also the unquestionable majority, not only of all that had been acting members, but even of all members who had enjoyed any title to act on that occasion: Wherefore, the lawful authority and power of the Associate Synod, as well as the Secession-cause,—did solely remain with them; now when the minority had thrown themselves out of it in the manner which has been represented. But they were violently obstructed from any exercise of the said authority and power, in the place where they were then met: And they could not have continued in it a moment longer than they did; without acquiescing in the new constitution, and the new cause,—which the voters of the Resolution and their party had then espoused.

Their case was now,—as if a judicatory were suddenly broken up and dispersed, by any other kind of violence;
without having an opportunity to close their meeting and appoint the next, in the ordinary form: While it would be absurd to imagine, that this could anywise detract from their judicative character,—on an after occasion of meeting. That majority with whom alone the Secession-cause, and the rights of the courts, did now remain,—could not but have a just title to constitute themselves, as the true Associate Synod; whenever and wherever they might afterwards meet for this purpose, upon full advertisement.

But the manner was not left at any such uncertainty: It was beautifully ordered otherwise, in the Lord’s adorable providence; that they were solemnly called by the Moderator of the former meeting, (who regularly had the place of the present Moderator, on his declining the exercise of that office),—to meet next day as the Associate Synod, at a place and hour specified; along with any former members of it, who should return to their duty and place.—And had these former members, on finding that the seven voting parties got only thirteen others to concur in their vote,—had they immediately given up with the voted resolution, as not having any shadow of a pretence to the character of a Synodical deed; confessing the irregularity of their conduct, and so returning to the proper state and business of the Synod: The woful breach would have been quickly, and most comfortably healed.

IV. In taking the course which has been explained, for maintaining the cause and constitution of the Associate Synod; these who were enabled to do so, have become the objects of most furious malignity and reproach: So that the Lord’s great goodness, in his remarkably interposing for their direction and through-bearing,—unto the preservation of the witnessing interest, when on the brink of ruin; has been grievously blasphemed. It may not therefore be improper, toward evidencing how much of God and how little of man was in this whole affair,—to give the following account.

The Ministers (all but one), with several Elders, who concurred in the contendings of that day,—had a very
very short meeting in Mr Gib’s house, on the morning of April 9th; while neither he, nor any one with him, had been seeking or expecting such a thing. Some came up, finding that the Synod was not met, for paying usual respects to the brethren (Messrs Alexander Moncrieff and Thomas Mair) who lodged in that house; some through a mistake,—in supposing that the committee of overtures was then to meet there, as on the day preceding; some for an opportunity of converse, about the dismal state of matters in the Synod: And all of these came up one after another, without the smallest fore-thought of the meeting which took place.

Being met in this providential and most unexpected manner, Mr James Thomson first proposed to have some conversation,—about what might be the way of their duty, in the present juncture: And this being agreed to, immediately one of the Ministers went and brought up two or three brethren whom he had left at the stair-foot; being all who were within his view at that place. After prayer, they entered upon conversation; under much heaviness of spirit, as they saw an impending ruin of the Lord’s work among their hands,—and were at their wits end, about how it might be prevented.

But they soon came to be unanimous in a general view, as to where the constitution and authority of the Synod was necessarily to lie,—and that it ought to be claimed accordingly; upon supposition of matters being driven to such an absurd and woful issue as afterwards took place,—over the belly of all regular and earnest contendings to be used, for getting the career stopt. And the original of this view, what gave the very first rise to such an apprehension in any of their minds,—was an observation of the number of Ministers now so undesignedly and unexpectedly met, in some recovery from the faintings of the night before; while not one had happened to come up to the house, but such as were against the Resolution then passed: That the majority of all the Ministers belonging to this meeting of Synod, abstracting from parties in the depending question,—was now present; while the Mini-

sters
sters are the only constant and habitual members of the Synod, and the proper judges on a doctrinal subject.

In this observation, there began to be a breaking of the thick and dark cloud,—which, immediately before, they could nowise see through. And they were like men let out of prison, or whose bands are loosed,—when thus brought to that view of a right way which hath been expressed. But not one syllable passed among them about any particular step to be taken,—in their manner of contending: For by the time that they had all spoken once about, as agreeing in the aforesaid general view,—they were pressingly called out to the Synod; and immediately closed their meeting.

Accordingly the Minister who took the protestation in the forenoon-sederunt,—had not the smallest fore-thought of such a step; till it occurred to him as necessary, after several hours spent in the course of reasoning: And far less could the adherers to it have any previous view of such a thing. It was not till night in the short interval of the two sederunts,—that this protestation was committed to writing: And then also the next protestation, with the last declaration and protestation, were first thought of,—and draughts of them prepared; when it was already too visible, how matters were going. Nor did any know that such steps were under consideration, or that such papers existed,—before the reading of them; except the two brethren who read them, and one more: While it was, moreover, an absolute secret in the breast of each of these two brethren,—whether he was determined to take the step for which each of them had a paper prepared, till the very moment of his taking it.

Such, as hath been represented, was the real case: Such it was, to the most certain knowledge of him who gives this account; let any rail against the credibility of it as they please. It was the doing of the Lord, eminently doing as he had said:—

*I will bring the blind by a way that they know not, I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight: These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.* And he will, in due time, vindicate

his
his own work on that occasion; to a perpetual confusion of all those malignant artifices which have been used, formerly and of late, for discrediting and blackening the same.

Section VI. Of the Restoration of the Associate Synod.

I. An account has been given of the Rupture which took place in the Synod, on the night of April 9th 1747:—That by the Resolution then voted, the whole Secession-Testimony, as such, was materially dropt; in giving allowance for what was still acknowledged, by a standing deed of the Synod, to be a material renounciation of it by oath: That this Resolution was pretended to be made as a Synodical deed, by the vote of 20 members, (of whom only thirteen were legal voters),—in opposition to protestations made against it by the majority, not only of all acting members, but also of all who had any title to act on the said affair: That the voting minority did, most absurdly, assume to themselves the character and form of the Associate Synod,—upon the new ground of their voted Resolution; in such a violent manner as could not have been got obstructed but by bodily force, which is not competent in an Ecclesiastical Court: That this minority, while throwing away the Testimony among their hands,—did thus, at the same time, throw themselves out of the proper constitution of the Associate Synod; shattering the frame of it into pieces: And that the said majority, (as the only step which then remained for them to take, in behalf of the Secession-cause and of their Synodical constitution),—did immediately withdraw; upon a Declaration and Protestation then made by the only acting Moderator, solemnly calling them to meet again in Synod at the time and place therein mentioned.

They met in consequence of this Declaration and Protestation, in Mr Gib's house on the forenoon of April 10th: Twelve Ministers* and eleven Elders, viz. of the Associate

*An excuse was offered and sustained for the absence of Mr William Mair, who went home before this sederunt. He acknowledged afterwards, in April 1749,—that he neglected to return on the second week of this meeting, without a due bar in his way.
ciate Presbytery of DUNFERMLINE,—Messrs James Thomson, Alexander Moncrieff, Thomas Mair, George Brown, and William Campbell, Ministers; with Alexander Lyel from Burntisland, William Henderson from Abernethy, David Donaldson from Ceres, Thomas Bogie from Lesly, and Thomas Drysdale from Muckhart,—ruling Elders: of the Associate Presbytery of GLASGOW,—Patrick Edmond from Balfron, ruling Elder: And of the Associate Presbytery of EDINBURGH,—Messrs Adam Gib, Andrew Clarkson, Patrick Matthew, James Scot, John Whyte, George Murray and Robert Archibald, Ministers; with Andrew Graham from Linlithgow, Charles Scot from Midholm, Walter Henderson from Gateshaw, John Wilson from Dunse, and James Johnston from Annandale,—ruling Elders.

This meeting having been constituted by Mr Thomas Mair, (who, as last Moderator, had opened the meeting of Synod* on Tuesday preceding),—he was unanimously continued Moderator; and Mr Gib was appointed to supply the place of the ordinary clerk, then confined by distress: After which, a part of the sederunt was spent in prayer; making confession of the Lord’s goodness toward them, as also of their staggerings and short comings in his work.

An overture to that purpose being then proposed, and deliberated upon with prayer; they unanimously passed an Act asserting the Constitution and Rights of the Associate Synod, according to previous contendings for the same:——In which (after a general review of these contendings), “They did and hereby do FIND, according to the foresaid Declaration and Protestation,—That the lawful authority and power of the Associate Synod is lawfully and fully devolved upon them, and lies among their hands: That they are the only lawful and rightly constitute Associate Synod, with the said authority and power: And that they are obliged, in duty to the Lord and his heritage, to exercise the same,—for supporting and carrying on

“the

*He opened it with Sermon from two texts compared, viz. Judg. xiii. 19. And the Angel did wondrously, and Manoah and his wife looked on.—Psal. xlvi. 10. Be still, and know that I am God.
“the Testimony which the Lord has put into the hands of the Associate Synod; in opposition to the material dropping, and allowing of (at least for a time) a material abjuration of that whole Testimony,—by the Resolutions foressed, and the method of carrying the same.”

II. At another sederunt the same day,—an Overture to that purpose being proposed, and deliberated upon with prayer; they unanimously passed an Act, further asserting the Constitution and Rights of the Associate Synod: In which “They did and hereby DO FIND*,

1. That none of the Ministers and Elders, presently in a way of separating from the Associate Synod, through turning aside from the lawful Constitution thereof and from the Testimony among their hands,—ought or can return to a seat in this Synod; but in the way of confessing the sinful steps and compliances which they have severally fallen into,—about the two Resolutions formerly mentioned, and the method of carrying the same†.

2. “That

*In the original Act, the articles are not numbered; but the words, and they find,—are repeated before each Article. Moreover, the two clauses which are here inclosed, after the word that,—are there subjoined to the word and, in these repetitions.

†When the Presbytery of Dunfermline held their ordinary meeting at Perth, on the 5th day of May ensuing,—they refused to admit Mr Ralph Erskine and Mr James Johnston to a seat in the Presbytery; because each of them refused to make the confession above-mentioned. Soon afterwards, these two brethren published a pamphlet bearing this title, viz. “A Narrative of the separation of the majority of Members, from the Associate Presbytery of Dunfermline.” And this pamphlet bears, that, upon their being refused a seat,—“The Reverend Mr Ralph Erskine called the Presbytery,” by reading a paper; in which he protested,—“That the other Brethren, who refused them a seat, cannot lawfully retain the power and authority of the Associate Presbytery of Dunfermline;—but that this Presbyterial power remains only in the hands of those that remain subordinate” to what he reckoned the Associate Synod: “And therefore” (said he) “I—do hereby call all the Members,—to attend the regular Constitution of this Presbytery of Dunfermline;—to meet in Mrs Davidson’s relict of the late bailie Davidson, at seven o’clock this evening:” Upon which he and his party withdrew: And it follows,—“The Associate Presbytery of Dunfermline met, according to the foresaid

“warning;”
2. "That none of the **Associate Presbyteries** can be lawful in their constitution or proceedings, but in a way of subordination to this Synod.

3. "That "warning;" consisting only of the above two Ministers (the first officiating as Moderator, and the other as clerk),—with the Elder from **Dunfermline**. And so, these three members made themselves the Associate Presbytery of **Dunfermline**; instead of waiting, till their pretended Synod should have formed them into a shadow of that character.

Here was something like an imitation of the step taken at the breach of the Synod, by those who contended against the two Resolutions; but, in reality, of a very different and inconsistent nature.——When the **majority** of an Ecclesiastical Court turns into any such course, that the minority cannot honestly continue with them; this **minority** (who, having the cause of Christ, cannot but have his authority among them) may warrantably constitute themselves into **another court**,—while they have no superior court, to put them into the place of that majority. And had the contenders against these Resolutions been really the minority,—or had not their case been, as expressed in the Declaration and Protestation made at the breach; they would have taken this course: Never imagining, that the character and authority of the Associate Synod belonged to them; more than the Associate Presbytery (upon the Secession or in their Declinature) imagined, that they might assume the character and constitution of the General Assembly.

It was beyond the line of their reason, to conceive that the **majority** of a court, neither dissolving themselves nor dissolved by a superior authority,—could possibly be in a state of separation from **that court**; in a state of separation from themselves! And they had not so learned Presbyterial order, or the common principles of Society; as to imagine that, in any supposable case, the **minority** of a court could become **that court**, in opposition to the majority,—without being so formed by a superior court: But only that, when the majority becomes a corrupt court,—the minority may (in the case before mentioned) form themselves into another and better court.——So that, if the two Resolutions had been really carried by the majority of the Associate Synod,—the opposers thereof must have still allowed them to be the Associate Synod, though in a very corrupt state; and must have formed themselves into another court, of a different denomination.

After all, when one considers the monstrous title of the aforesaid pamphlet, with the very singular conduct and claim of the two Ministers therein set forth; in opposition to six of their brethren then present,—beside two of them, on the same side, then absent: It may well be wondered at, how these two brethren and their party could ever have the face to exclaim against their brethren on the other side,—in the affair of the Breach; upon the topicks of extraordinary, unprecedented, unpresbyterian management,—and of setting up a new constitution!
3. “That none of the Associate Sessions can be lawful in their constitution or proceedings, but in a way of subordination to this Synod; or, at least, in a way of waiting,—until the state of the present cause and controversy be got laid particularly open unto them.

4. “That only these Elders of the respective Associate Congregations who shall be disposed as above, together with a minister in subordination to this Synod,—can make up the lawful and rightly constitute Session of these Congregations.

5. “That (seeing the majority of Ministers in the Associate Presbytery of Glasgow—have been active in carrying on the foresaid Resolutions), the said Associate Presbytery of Glasgow cannot be lawful in their constitution of proceedings,—nor be lawfully acknowledged as such, by any who are cleaving to the Lord’s Cause and Testimony; until the said Presbytery shall return unto that Cause and Testimony, in subordination to this Synod.

6. “That none of the Ministers or Elders foresaid—ought or can return unto a seat in either of the other two Associate Presbyteries, nor to moderate or sit in any Associate Sessions; but in the way of confessing the sinful steps and compliances which they have severally fallen into,—about the two Resolutions foresaid, and the method of carrying the same.

7. “That none of the probationers in the Secession—ought or can lawfully preach the Gospel, but in subordination to this Synod; nor take appointments for that end, but from Presbyteries in due subordination thereto.

8. “That the young men presently on trials before the Associate Presbytery of Glasgow, for licence to preach the Gospel as probationers,—ought to be remitted unto “one respect the minority,—nothing more would have been needful to justify their whole management, and their Synodical constitution; nothing more than the unquestionable fact of their being (as these two Brethren pretended to be) on the right side, in the matter of the controversy. In common modesty, then, there should have been no quarrel with the method of their procedure; but only with the matter of their Testimony.
“one or both of the other two Associate Presbyteries, for this purpose. And,

9. “That (as the foresaid Ministers and Elders are hereby invited and beseeched, in brotherly love, to return unto their duty,—so) the Synod ought, in due time, and as the Lord shall clear their way,—to consider upon calling them unto an account for their conduct foresaid, according to the discipline of the Lord’s House; providing they shall not return to this Synod,—in the way of confessing the sinful steps and compliances which they have severally fallen into, as above.”

The Synod then adjourned their meeting till the Wednesday following,—after appointing “that Tuesday next be Synodically observed, as a day of solemn fasting and humiliation;” particularly “in confessing our own manifold provocations, failings and infirmities,—with the sinful steps and compliances that have been taken and made on the present occasion, as to the management of the Associate Synod: And likewise in thankful acknowledgment of what pity and direction the Lord has, at the same time, been graciously pleased to manifest, for the support of his Cause and Testimony; as also for calling upon the Lord, that he may be graciously pleased to strengthen that which he hath wrought for us.”

III. In their first sederunt on Wednesday April 15th, they passed an Act condemning the Resolution made in the Synod on Wednesday last week, against calling for the Reasons and Answers:—In which, upon the grounds before explained, “The Synod did and hereby do condemn the Resolution above-mentioned; as a step very sinful and dangerous, in a way most unreasonable and disorderly: And they determine that, in opposition thereunto,—the Reasons of Protest, with the Answers to the same, ought to have been called for, read and considered; and that it is the duty of the Synod now to do so.”

IV. The Synod having accordingly spent three long sederunts, this and the following day, upon these Reasons and Answers; they unanimously approved of the Answers, when corrected and amended,—“as taking off the pretended force of the Reasons foresaid.”

And,
And, at their sederunt on Thursday evening, they passed an Act condemning the Resolution made in Synod on Thursday last week: In which, upon the grounds before explained, “The Synod did and hereby do condemn the Resolution above-mentioned; as a very sinful and dangerous step:—Being a step which, though it left the foresaid sentence of Synod in April 1746 formally standing, was yet a material reversing of the same; so that, with awful inconsistency, it enacted and enjoined an allowance, at least for some time, of a practice which has been and still is found to be a profanation of the Lord’s name, and a material abjuration of his whole Cause and Testimony among the hands of the Associate Synod;—whereby that whole Cause and Testimony was materially dropt: And being a step which introduced a sinful and dangerous innovation; manifestly subversive of Presbyterian principles and order in the house of God: And being a step which was carried in a method so unfair, unreasonable and disorderly,—as openly contradicted the duty, perverted the business, overturned the whole order, and unhinged the constitution of the court: And therefore being a step exceedingly dishonourable to Zion’s King, Lord and Lawgiver; and destructive of his whole Cause and Testimony among a witnessing body.”

V. At the same sederunt,—an overture to that purpose being proposed, and deliberated upon with prayer; they unanimously passed an Act concerning the Ministers and Elders presently in a way of separating from the Associate Synod: In which, upon the grounds before explained, “The Synod FIND,—that, by the irregular and arbitrary procedure of the said Ministers and Elders, truth was wounded; a Testimony for the Cause of Christ among their hands buried, the consciences of men ensnared, and anarchy and confusion attempted to be introduced:—And they FIND, That by their assuming to themselves an arbitrary power of their own, which cannot possibly be derived from Christ, seeing it is employed against Christ the alone King and Head of his Church,—and for burying his Truth, Cause and Interest; and by their not acting according to the rule of Christ’s word, which is the alone rule of the procedure of courts constituted

“in
“in his name,—but in open contradiction to the same; and by their obstinate subverting of that order which Christ, as the God of order, hath commanded to be observed in his house, which is the Church of the living God;—they are highly censurable; and have themselves, by this mal-administration, fallen from all right and title to any present actual exercise of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, committed by the Lord Jesus to the office-bearers of his house,—ay and until they be sensible of the sinfulness of their above conduct, acknowledge the same to the glory of God, and return unto their duty to him.”

The Synod found themselves obliged to pass this act, for a speedy obviating of the apostasy which was then come in like a flood. The grounds upon which the act proceeded, were of most notorious truth; as having been openly transacted in the Synod. And, by this act, the Synod did only exercise a declaratory power; a thing altogether different from the disciplinary power which they came to exercise afterwards: As a judicial asserting of what persons have notoriously done and deserved, (like the procedure of the Synod at Jerusalem about the false teachers),—and which may be about persons not subject to the judicatory, (like what the Associate Presbytery found, in their declinature, about the General Assembly); as this is altogether different from a formal inflicting of censure upon them.

VI. Next day the Synod unanimously added the two following questions to their Formula,—for being put to young men before licence, and to Ministers before ordination, viz.

“Quest. 1. Are you satisfied with, and do you purpose to adhere unto and maintain the principles about the present Civil Government,—which are declared and maintained in the Associate Presbytery’s Answers to Mr Nairn’s Reasons of dissent, with the defence thereunto subjoined?

“Quest. 2. Do you acknowledge and promise subjection to [this Presbytery, in subordination to the Associate Synod],—as presently constituted in a way of testifying against the sinful management of the prevailing party in the Synod, at some of the first diets of their meeting

“at
"at Edinburgh in April 1747; [or other Presbyteries in that subordination, as you shall be regularly called];—and do you approve of, and purpose to adhere unto and maintain the said Testimony, in your station and capacity: And do you approve of, and purpose to adhere unto and maintain,—the sentence of Synod in April 1746, concerning the religious clause of some Burgess-oaths; and that in opposition to all tenets and practices to the contrary*?

That same day, the Synod went through several pieces of ordinary business.——They also passed an act for a public fast; containing such clauses as in their act for a Synodical fast on Tuesday this week. They appointed three young men, on trials before the Associate Presbytery of Glasgow,—to pass the same before that of Edinburgh: And (at the desire of the brethren belonging to it) translated the next meeting of this Presbytery from Stow to Edinburgh. They appointed that extracts of their acts at this meeting should be sent, with all expedition,—to the several Presbyteries and Sessions in subordination to them; for being engrossed in their minutes, at the first sederunts after coming to hand.——And they appointed that these acts (with the Reasons and Answers) should be published: Recommending to one of their number to oversee the printing; as also to illustrate the same by an Introduction and Appendix, with what notes or additions otherwise he should see proper,—agreeably to the tenor of the Synod’s acts and proceedings.

VII. Mr John Cleland at Balfron, who had been absent on the preceding week, came up to the Synod this week; and adhered to his brethren,—in their essays of maintaining the proper constitution of the Synod, with the cause among their hands. Mr Andrew Arrot at Dunnichen, who was absent from the whole of this meeting,—concurred with his brethren, on the first occasion afterwards, in their present contendings.— Mr David Smyton at Kilmaurs, Mr John Erskine

*These two questions are also used at the ordination of Elders: But the first inclosed clause in the second question is then made to run thus,—"the Session of this Congregation, in subordination to the Associate Presbytery of——, and to the Associate Synod; and the other inclosed clause is then omitted, The Formula, as it stood before is prefixed to the first volume of the present Display."
Erskine at Lesly, and Mr Isaac Paton at Temple-patrick in Ireland,—returned to the Synod at their next meeting in August; with proper confessions of their sinful steps and compliances, on the first week of the meeting in April;—which they had made before to the Presbyteries of Edinburgh and Dunfermline, and to a committee of the latter which had met in Ireland: And hereupon Messrs Cleland, Smyton and Paton,—were ordained to meet, with Elders from their respective Sessions, as the Associate Presbytery of Glasgow. Mr Andrew Thomson at Mearns returned to the Synod in like manner, at their meeting in November following; as he had done to the Presbytery of Glasgow, some time before.—Mr Thomas Somerville at Newcastle took part with neither side, in the affair of the breach.

Thus, when the consternation arising from the prodigious shock which the protesting brethren had given to the Associate Synod—was somewhat abated; the division of the Seceding Ministers turned out as follows: That these seven protesters got only other five of their brethren to take part in their sinful cause and constitution, with whom they formed a new sort of Synod; while nineteen of these Ministers, who had been kept or recovered from this hour of temptation, remained in the Associate Synod,—upon the original ground of the Secession-Testimony.

And there can scarcely be a more ridiculous absurdity, than the pretence which these twelve brethren made,—of their being the Associate Synod: If it be not the pretence which they made soon afterwards, in an act of their Synod,—of their having a power of jurisdiction over the other nineteen, or a right to exercise discipline upon them when found expedient; a strange contrast to the groundless outcry which they made against these other brethren,—as having trampled upon Presbyterian parity!

Section VII. Of the Synod’s procedure against their separating Brethren.

The brethren now referred to were these, viz. Messrs Ebenezer Erskine Minister of Stirling, Ralph Erskine at Dunfermline, James Fisher at Glasgow, James Mair at Linton, William Hutton at Stow, David Horn at Cam-

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busnethan, Henry Erskine at Falkirk, John McCara at Burntshields, Andrew Black at Cumbernauld, James Johnston at Dundee, John Smith at Jedburgh, and David Telfer at Monteith.

As the Synod had found, by an Act on the 10th of April 1747, concerning these brethren,—“That they ought, in due time, and as the Lord shall clear their way, to consider upon calling them unto an account for their conduct, according to the order and discipline of the Lord’s House; providing they shall not return to this Synod, in the way of confessing the sinful steps and compliances which they have severally fallen into;” The Synod did accordingly begin that procedure in August 1747, and finished it in February 1750.—And, in order to a proper view of this matter, five things are to be severally represented, viz. the Libel put into the hands of these brethren,—the first, further, and final procedure upon that Libel; and the case of the Higher Excommunication.

Article I. Of the Libel put into the hands of the separating Brethren.

At their meeting in August 1747,—“The Synod considering the manifest defection from and opposition to the Lord’s Cause and Testimony among their hands, by the Ministers in a way of separating from this Synod; and considering the manifest awful spreading of this infection among others, elders and people; and considering the loud call hereby given, to advise about the remedy of this evil,—by the means of the Lord’s appointment, in exercising the discipline of his house for that end:” They accordingly did advise upon this subject; at their meetings in August and November that year, and in January 1748. The result hereof was, that they agreed upon a Libel against these Ministers; and took proper measures for having it put into their hands,—with citations to compear before the Synod upon that Libel, at their meeting in April following.

The Libel began with seven general propositions, about matters of heinous sin and scandal; as contrary to several passages of the holy scriptures; and of our subordinate standards,
Period III.  Of the Libel.  

standards,—which were quoted upon each of them:  After which these propositions were particularly applied, in seven articles of charge against the Ministers above-mentioned.  And these articles do here immediately follow (but changed from the second to the third person); the said passages quoted in relation to each being marked at the foot of the page, after the several numbers of the Articles.

I. Messrs Ebenezer Erskine, Ralph Erskine, James Fisher, William Hutton, David Horn, Henry Erskine, and John McCara,—did respectively, at the meetings of the Associate Synod in the months of April and September in the year 1746, protest against the Decision of the Associate Synod on the 9th day of that month of April, concerning a religious clause in some Burgess-oaths; though the said decision did plainly amount to a necessary stand for the Testimony already among their hands,—without any specious appearance of reason for the said protesting, in a consistency with the holding of that Testimony:  And afterwards, before the meeting of the Synod in the month of April in the year 1747,—they did respectively give in their said protests, with pretended reasons thereof, subscribed by them respectively; in a stile and strain most indecent and undutiful†, and containing false charges against the Synod in plain matters of fact‡.

II. The


†In the evidences upon which the several Articles of the Libel were found proven, it is observed as to this branch of the first Article,—that these Reasons contain most injurious charges against the decision of Synod, “in very absolute and dogmatical terms;” that thereby the decision “is openly misrepresented, and odiously wrested;” that “all this is carried on with most groundless railing accusations against the Synod, as to their passing of the said decision,—and as to the method, springs and motives of their procedure thereunto;—the Synod is very unaccountably traduced, by charging them with most arbitrary and arrogant procedure in that decision;—the constitution and authority of the Synod, on that occasion, is very grossly traduced and vilified;—the Synod is treated with high insults, and scornful contempt:”  All which points are there instructed, by a great variety of instances.

‡They say,—“The brethren who first brought this debate upon the field, would not give way to the consideration of any other overture “of
II. The said Ministers, in the ninth of their said pretended Reasons, which is subscribed or adopted by them all,—have vented and do maintain a tenet of mutual forbearance, directly authorizing a toleration of known and acknowledged sin†.

III. The said Messrs Ebenezer Erskine, Ralph Erskine, James Fisher, William Hutton, David Horn, Henry Erskine, John McCara, Andrew Black, John Smith, and David Telfer,—did push for, or concur in and carry on a most disorderly procedure in a Court of CHRIST: Forasmuch as, at the foresaid meeting of Synod in the month of April in the year 1747,—they pushed for, or concurred in and pretended to carry a Resolution to proceed unto a vote upon the following question, (as before expressed); and to “of whatever importance; till the question about the Burgess-oath should be first discussed:” And, after mentioning several affairs or overtures, they add; “such was the keenness,—that all these, and other important affairs of far greater concern, could not be admitted to enter into the consideration of the Synod.” But so grossly false and calumnious was all this that all the affairs mentioned did actually enter into the consideration of the Synod, without any opposition whatsoever; so far as then proposed and found practicable;—in so much that the greatest part of the number of sederunts, during the dependence of the question about the Burgess-oath,—was wholly spent upon these and other affairs: As is particularly instructed in the foresaid evidences.

II. Eph. v. 11. 1 Thess. v. 22. 1 Tim. vi. 3. Tit. ii. 7. Conf. xx. 3, 4. xxvi. 2. Larg. Cat. 112. 145.

†The passages particularly referred to are these, viz. “Even upon supposition we should grant,—that there is sufficient objective evidence unto all, that the swearing the clause now condemned would be doing a thing that is virtually, and upon the matter, a sinful receding from any part of the Testimony of the day, which we are professing to hold; though it were to be granted, that this behoved to be the intention or tendency of the work, whatever was the intention of the worker: Yet still—the Synod ought to have injoined a mutual forbearance;—the Synod—ought rather to have injoined this mutual forbearance, than to have condemned and prohibited the present swearing of the said clause:—And we ought to carry out forbearance towards one another thus far, etc. And whereas these on the other side may possibly alledge, that there can be no warrantable forbearance in a matter sinful, when it is made the subject of a solemn oath; to this we would answer, etc.”

III. 1 Cor. xiv. 40 2 Cor. xiii. 8. Prov. ii. 3, 4, 5. John vii. 24. 2 Cor. iv. 2. 1 Thess. ii. 3. 1 Cor. xiv. 33. Conf. xx. 4. xxv. 4. xxxi. 3. Larg. Cat. 108, 113, 144, 145.
have this their question voted,—before proceeding to call for the Reasons of Protest against the said decision, with the Answers thereunto, for having them read and considered,—though the reading and considering of these Reasons and Answers was altogether and peculiarly necessary, for a fair opening of the cause;—which disorderly procedure was manifestly injurious to the truth asserted in the decision struck at by their said question, as bringing it on to be condemned in the dark: As also, instead of suffering the matter of truth and duty, as to the decision struck at by their said question, to be fairly on the field,—they, in their said question, did aim a secret and covert thrust at the same, under a deceitful colour of due tenderness and regard to brethren; which disorderly procedure was of a special tendency to impose on the judgment of members in the case: And likewise the said Messrs Ebenezer Erskine, Ralph Erskine, James Fisher, William Hutton, David Horn, Henry Erskine, and John McCara,—did violently sustain themselves judges concerning their said question, though they were manifestly and immediately parties in the matter against the Synod; as being protesters against their decision, that was struck at by their said question in their own favours;—which disorderly procedure did strike directly against the lawful constitution of the Court.

IV. The Ministers last mentioned, together with the said Messrs Andrew Black, John Smith, and David Telfer,—by their pushing for, or concurring in and pretending to carry the RESOLUTION for a vote upon their said question did claim a pretended power; and the said Messrs Ebenezer Erskine, Ralph Erskine, James Fisher, David Horn, Henry Erskine, John McCara Andrew Black, and David Telfer,—by their pushing for, or concurring in and pretending to carry the RESOLUTION upon their said question, did exercise the said pretended power; of tolerating a known and acknowledged sin, even though peculiarly heinous: Inasmuch as, by the said Resolution, they pretended to tolerate a present swearing among Seceders, of the religious

gious clause of some Burgess-oaths; which had been justly found, in the decision of Synod about that clause, still professedly by them left standing,—to be a swearing in general contradiction to the present Testimony, and to the oath of the Bond for renewing our Covenants;—and hereby they did materially drop the said whole Testimony for reformation as among the hands of the Synod; giving allowance, at least for a time, for a material renunciation thereof by oath: As also, by the said Resolution, they brought a sinful and dangerous innovation into the church of CHRIST; inasmuch as they did thereby pretend to subject the foresaid decree of Synod, in a controversy of faith and case of conscience,—to the consultation of inferior judicatories, particularly Kirk-sessions.

V. All the Ministers first above-mentioned have constituted themselves (particularly at Stirling, upon one or other of the days of the month of June of the said year 1747) into a pretended Synod in a way of separating from the rightly constitute Associate Synod to which they belonged,—through turning aside from the lawful constitution thereof, and from the received Testimony still maintained by the said Synod: Thus engaging in a schismatical constitution, for support of their foresaid backsliding course.

VI. The said Messrs James Mair, William Hutton, Andrew Black, James Johnston, John Smith and David Telfer, beside the several articles charged against them as above,— have made themselves and are art and part in the guilt of the whole other articles, charged as above against their brethren foresaid: Inasmuch as they neglected a suitable and seasonable Testimony against their open offences, contained in these other articles; and, on the contrary, they have schismatically embodied themselves with these their brethren, in the way of their continuing in and carrying on these their offences,—by their constituting with them into a pretended Synod, as above.

VII.


VI. Exod. xxxii. 35. Lev. xix. 17. Eph. v. 11. 1 Tim. v. 22. 2 John ver. 11. Conf. xxvi. 1, 2. Larg. Cat. 145.
VII. After giving in their foresaid protests, with pretended reasons thereof,—and before the foresaid meeting of Synod in the month of April 1747; the said Mr Ralph Erskine hath framed and published a pamphlet, intitled ["The lawfulness of the religious clause of some Burgess-oaths asserted," etc.†]: and the said Messrs James Fisher and John McCara have framed and published a pamphlet, intitled ["A Review of a Pamphlet, intitled,—"A Serious Inquiry into the Burgess-oaths of Edinburgh, Perth, and Glasgow;" etc.‡]: And the said Mr Ebenezer Erskine hath, since the said meeting of Synod, framed and published a pamphlet, intitled ["A true state of the Question upon which a Breach followed in the Associate Synod, at Edinburgh, Thursday April 9th 1747||":]

And


†The author runs into the strange extravagance of accusing the Synod (even before the breach) in respect of their decision, as follows, viz. "These,—instead of taking proper means for the conviction of apostates, are using means that tend natively to harden them in their apostasy and atheism; and to hinder the whole generation from taking with any charge at all.—And thus the new light that some are led by,—natively tends—to harden not only Prelatists and Jacobites, but also Deists, Arians, Arminians, and Atheists too; and to foster in the minds of an Atheistical age, that there is neither any true God, nor true Religion that ought to be professed.” p. 82, 85. As also, in opposition to the Secession-Testimony and matter of fact, he says,—“Though in the covenanting period intervening,” (betwixt 1592 and the Revolution), “it is noticed in the Testimony that there were several legal securities given to the Church, which the Revolution-Settlement sinfully neglected and passed over; yet the settlement of Church-Government particularly, had never any other legal security during that interval: And therefore as to that particular, the Revolution-Parliament behaved to look back to the first securities it had, which were all ratified in 1592; and ratify it, for the more security in establishing the Presbyterian government.” p. 51.

‡In opposition to the Secession-Testimony and matter of fact, relative to the Treaty of Union, the author has the face to say,—“The Parliament of Scotland do not determine, whether the Church of England was Episcopal or Presbyterian; they leave it to the Parliament of England, to abolish Episcopacy and settle Presbytery, if they had a mind,” p. 76.

||The author says,—“If the infallible Apostles submitted their doctrines to the examination of the Bereans, by the touch-stone of the word; “much
And the said Mr Ralph Erskine hath also, since that time, framed and published a pamphlet, intitled [“Fancy no Faith; or, a seasonable Admonition and Information to Seceders, against the sinful constitution of some brethren into a pretended Judicatory,” etc*]:—All which Pamphlets do evidently impugn and subvert the necessary Testimony “much more should we, a company of fallible men, submit our decisions to the trial of Presbyteries and Kirk-Sessions, which generally consist of the most godly and judicious men in the several Congregations,—and are by them communicate unto praying societies also, for their opinion: And this judgment of the diffused Church being returned from Kirk-Sessions unto Presbyteries, and from Presbyteries unto the Synod; a law or decision might have been made with relation to the Burgess-oath, with the harmonious consent of the whole Church,” p. 10. And the amount of all this is, when applied to the case in hand,—as if the Apostles had given people a toleration for receiving or rejecting their doctrines at pleasure, at least till once the Bereans should please to return their judgment upon the subject: And as if the former Testimony of the Secession, in condemning and abjuring Independency, Sectarian principles and Latitudinarian tenets,—was now to go all for nothing; in not passing or requiring obedience unto a decision of Synod, upon a controversy of Faith and case of Conscience,—but upon having the opinion (not only of Presbyteries and Kirk-Sessions, but) even of praying Societies, the judgment of the diffused body, the harmonious consent of the whole Church—to do so.

*According to this writer,—“The Bond for renewing our Covenants, and the religious clause of some Burgess-oaths, are so far from being contradictory oaths; that to make them so, is to contradict the whole scope and design of the Testimony, and to impose upon human understanding: Also,—the decision which declared the religious Clause of some Burgess-oaths to be sinful, was a rash, unreasonable and sinful decision; in flat contradiction to, and violation of our own and our fore-fathers Covenants.” p. 6, 7.

Yet he proceeds as follows! viz. “The Revolution-Parliament cannot justly be charged with omissions, as to the settlement of the true Religion:—The true Religion, as it was professed and sworn to in that second period, was espoused and professed by the Revolution-parliament:—The true Religion, as professed in the Second Reformation-period from 1638 to 1649, in opposition to the indignities done to it in the preceding reigns, was professed by the Revolution-parliament; which does, either more general or more formally and expressly, rescind all the wicked laws that were made against any part of the true Religion, that was professed in that period as well as the former:—Either in a general or more particular way, the civil settlement of Religion, or the establishment thereof at the Revolution, rescinds
mony for reformation which themselves have solemnly espoused; and are of an evident tendency to break and seduce the Lord’s people. And likewise the Ministers all above-mentioned, at a meeting in Stirling in the month of October 1747, in the pretended Synodical capacity into which they have separated themselves,—have framed and published a pretended act, evidently of the same import and tendency as above; and grossly defaming the rightly constitute Synod, in their essaying to maintain the foresaid Testimony,—yea audaciously pretending to condemn and annul their lawful constitution and proceedings: And all of them are guilty in the matter of the said pretended act, notwithstanding that some of them may have been absent from the said meeting; inasmuch as none of them do appear in making any suitable confession of their former sinful

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“rescinds all the bad laws that were made against the true Religion; and ratifies all the good laws that ever were made in favours of it, since the Reformation.—The National Covenant, as it was sworn to and explained in 1638, and also the solemn League and Covenant,—are, by express acts of the Revolution-parliament, vindicated from the indignities done to them in the preceding reigns:——The Revolution-parliament—do assert and avouch the alone headship of our Lord Christ over his Church, the intrinsic power of the Church, and the divine right of Presbytery.” p. 19, 20, 21, 23, 27.

Yea, besides all these particulars,—a general overthrow is made of the whole of the Secession-Testimony, with respect to all the public evils which are therein witnessed against, as standing grounds of the Lord’s controversy with this generation;—and that with a monstrous imputation to the Associate Judicatories formerly, of what had never been before heard of,—as having ever before been in the mind or mouth of any belonging to them: While the author makes no bones of affirming,—“That the historical facts in the Testimony, such as these relating to the Revolution, were always excepted by the Associate Judicatories from being any proper part of it, as a Testimony binding the conscience before God;—which formerly were judged no binding part of it all.” p. 26, 27.

And the above are only some instances,—of the practical Testimony which was soon given, by the opposers of the Synod’s decision about the religious clause of the Burgess-oath, unto the equity of that decision; or unto the truth of the inconsistency which it taught, betwixt the said oath and the Secession-Testimony: While they found themselves obliged, even so early,—to manage their defence of that oath, in the way of openly breaking down the fabric of that Testimony.——But the gross fallacy and falsehood of the foregoing attacks upon it, were soon afterwards exposed; by the Introduction to the Synod’s proceedings in the year 1747 and 1748,—repeated in an Appendix to this volume.
ful conjunction with the said pretended Synod,—nor in taking up any suitable Testimony against their sinful constitution and proceedings in general, or the said pretended act in particular.

Article II. Of the first procedure upon the Libel in April 1748.

I. The Synod having found, on the 5th of the said month,—that the Libel had been duly put into the hands of the several Ministers therein mentioned, with a summons to compear upon it at this time; they were three times severally called, but none of them compeared. On the 6th, the Synod did find all these Ministers contumacious; and did also find each of the seven articles of the Libel relevant, if proven to infer censure.

II. Next day, Mr William Hutton appeared at the bar; insisting for leave to read a paper which, he said, contained his mind about the affair. And though he acknowledged, that this paper was not in the form of Answers unto the Articles of the Libel, but might contain some things extraneous thereto; yet the Synod agreed to hear the paper, as his speech to them.

“He then introduced himself with a short verbal declaration,—that he had retracted his protest against the decision of the Synod in April 1746, concerning a religious clause of some Burgess-oaths; though he explained neither how nor where;—averring that he was not now to be looked upon, as one who had any freedom to stand in opposition to that decision: And that he had no freedom to approve of the transmission in the second resolution,—or vote, as he called it; being of the mind, that it ought to have been dropt for the peace of the Church,—besides other objections he had against it, that he could tell any of the Ministers in private.—He then read a long paper in the hearing of the Synod: Wherein, notwithstanding his verbal declaration, he attacked and impugned the constitution and whole late proceedings of the Synod,—in a very absolute and audacious manner, and in a very ridiculing and insulting strain; telling them, that from the words of their acts

“he
"he judged them. And, in all this paper, he made no acknowledgment of any of the sins and scandals on which he was libelled: But only advanced a number of very groundless and unaccountable charges and accusations against the Synod; particularly as if they were teachers of new and erroneous doctrine,—in an alleged excluding of ruling Elders from being judges, in controversies of faith and cases of conscience. And he concluded with declaring,—that he did not now appear before the Synod as a pannel, or as answering the citation given him upon the Libel: Making a large profession of his acting in all this from a necessity laid upon his conscience, of using such freedom with his fathers and brethren, not to suffer sin to lie upon them;—and declaring his resolution of continuing in the full exercise of his ministry, as having received it from the Lord Jesus Christ, notwithstanding any sentences that might be passed against him; averring, that as he said they could not be binding in heaven, so they should by him be held null and void.—Upon which he withdrew.”

“After some members had been employed, at considerable length,—in vindicating the constitution and proceedings of the Synod, against the bold and injurious attack made upon the same by Mr Hutton;—the Synod did and hereby do find Mr Hutton highly censurable, in respect of his present conduct and behaviour.”

III. At a following sederunt the same day, with other two on (April 12th and 13th) the ensuing week,—the Synod found all the Articles of the Libel proven; upon the grounds which have been explained: Except that the fact charged in the fifth Article was found proven by the declaration of some witnesses, a list of whom had been subjoined to the Libel,—compared with a notoriousness of the fact; and that they dismissed the clause of the seventh article which particularly respected Mr McCara,—as depending upon the single testimony of Mr Fisher, in the pamphlet referred to.

The Synod considering, at their next sederunt, what they had already found concerning all these Ministers; as also the additional sin and scandal whereof Mr Hutton had been
Of the first procedure upon the Libel.  

Period III.

been found guilty;—considering likewise several passages of Scripture of and our Confession*; “which hold forth the duty and necessity that is incumbent upon ecclesiastical judicatories, to proceed without delay in the inflicting of censures upon Ministers and others, who are found guilty of such heinous sins and scandals as the foresaid Ministers are justly found guilty of,—striking directly against the whole Cause of Christ and Testimony for reformation as among the hands of the Synod, and against the authority of our LORD JESUS CHRIST in whose name they are constitute: THEREFORE the Synod did and hereby do agree and resolve to proceed unto censure against all the Ministers foresaid, at this present meeting.”

IV. A part of the first sederunt on the ensuing day (April 14th) was “spent in prayer; supplicating the throne of Grace; for divine counsel and direction in this weighty and important affair: And confessing sin in the suitableness to the present occasion; as to our sinful failings in judicative managements, particularly with relation to the present affair;—and as to what sinful steps and compliances any brethren present were left unto, upon the affair of the two sinful resolutions in April last year.”

Thereafter (and upon the grounds afore-mentioned concerning them) “the Synod DID and hereby DO, (in the name and by the authority of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the only King and Head of his Church, and according to the powers committed by HIM to them as a Court constitute in his name), actually SUSPEND all the said Ministers” (excepting Mr Hutton) “from the exercise of the office of the holy ministry; prohibiting them, severally and conjunctly, from all and any present exercise of the said office of the holy ministry in the Church of CHRIST: With CERTIFICATION, That if they shall not return unto their duty,—acknowledging the matters of heinous sin and scandal found proven against “them,

“them, with their foresaid contumacious behaviour, unto the glory of God,—and apply unto the Synod against their next ordinary meeting, for giving satisfaction with respect to the whole of this their sinful course and conduct; that the Synod will then consider upon proceeding against them by some higher censure, as they shall see cause.”

V. Mr Hutton’s case having been reserved for a separate consideration,—it was proceeded unto, in the afternoon-sederunt of the same day. And (upon the grounds afore-mentioned concerning him) “The Synod DID and hereby DO,” (in the name and by the authority and according to the powers before expressed), “actually DEPOSE the said Mr William Hutton from the office of the holy ministry; prohibiting him from all and any exercise, henceforth, of the said office of the holy ministry in the Church of CHRIST;—as also, they DID and hereby DO, in the same great name and authority, EXCOMMUNICATE the said Mr Hutton from all communion with the Church of Christ in her sealing ordinances: With CERTIFICATION, That if he shall not return unto his duty,—acknowledging, unto the glory of God, the matters of heinous sin and scandal found proven against him, as also his foresaid contumacy, with his sinful and scandalous behaviour when he appeared before the Synod on the 7th of this month,—and timeously apply unto this Synod, for giving satisfaction with respect to the whole of his said sinful course and conduct; that the Synod will consider upon proceeding against him, by the highest censure of the Church.”

At the close of the meeting, the Synod appointed their whole proceedings in the present affair to be published,—with all convenient expedition: And a committee of their number was employed to subjoin an Appendix; extending and illustrating the Evidences upon which the several Articles of the Libel had been found proven, (and which are materially comprehended in the foregoing state of the controversy):—All which was done accordingly.

ARTICLE
Article III. Of the further procedure upon the Libel, in August 1748.

I. The Synod being again met, on the second of this month,—they began next day to consider upon proceeding, at the present meeting, to inflict higher censure upon the suspended Ministers; as finding that they were paying no regard to the certification in the sentence of suspension, but were superadding further contumacy to their offence: And two sederunts were then spent, in reasoning upon this subject.

II. On the ensuing day,—“They did and hereby do agree and resolve to proceed just now, to inflict higher censure upon the suspended Ministers.”—After further reasoning upon the subject, and considering what they had already found concerning these Ministers; “The Synod DID and hereby DO, (in the name and by the authority of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the only King and Head of his Church, and according to the powers committed by HIM to them as a court constitute in his name), actually DEPOSE all the said Ministers from the office of the holy Ministry; prohibiting them, severally and conjunctly, from all and any exercise, henceforth, of the said office of the holy Ministry in the Church of CHRIST;—as also, they DID and hereby DO, in the same great name and by the same authority, EXCOMMUNICATE and debar them from all communion with the Church of Christ in her sealing ordinances: With CERTIFICATION, that if they shall not return unto their duty,—acknowledging, unto the glory of God, the several matters of heinous sin and scandal found proven against them, with their contumacy at last meeting, and their farther contumacy in not compearing at this meeting (for the purpose expressed in the certification subjoined to the sentence of suspension passed against them in April last,)—and apply unto the Synod, at their ordinary meeting in April next year, for giving satisfaction with respect to the whole of this their sinful course and conduct; that the Synod will then consider upon proceed-

“ing
“ing against them with the highest censure of the Church, as they shall see cause.”

III. The Synod then resumed the consideration of Mr Hutton’s case: And finding that he was paying no regard to the former certification, in the sentence of deposition and lesser excommunication which had been passed against him,—but was superadding farther contumacy to his offence; they renewed that certification,—with a particular limiting of it, as in the certification now given concerning the other Ministers.

Next day, the Synod appointed intimation of the sentence now passed against these other Ministers—to be made within all their congregations; declaring the same to be now vacant: As this had been formerly done with respect to Mr Hutton; the suspension having been also intimated in several of these congregations.

And they appointed their proceedings at this time to be published, along with those at their last meeting; the publishing of which, from the Appendix not being fully expeded by their Committee, was hitherto delayed,—but took place soon afterwards.

Article IV. Of the final Procedure upon the Libel; in April and August 1749, and in February 1750.

I. The Synod saw meet, before entering upon any new procedure about their separating Brethren,—to spend two sederunts, on the 5th and 6th of April 1749, in the business of privy-censures; concerning the falls and failings which some members had been left to, with regard to the Lord’s work among their hands.

On this occasion, seven of the Ministers [Messrs Alexander Moncrieff, Thomas Mair, Adam Gib, William Campbell,—David Smyton, John Erskine and Andrew Thomson] underwent a rebuke: The first four,—for offensive heat of temper and unadvisedness of language, on several occasions, when debates happened in the Synod; and the other three,—for some former engagements in the course of the separating brethren, both before and after the breach. And those seven, with other nine [Messrs James Thomson, Andrew Clarkson, Patrick Matthew, James Scot, George Brown,
Of the final procedure upon the Libel. Period III.

Brown, John Whyte, George Murray and William Mair, Ministers,—with John Wilson, Elder from Dunse—underwent an admonition; for those staggerings and short comings, at the meetings of Synod in September 1746 and April 1747, which have been formerly explained: (as did also Mr Robert Archibald, when he came up on the following week). After which, a suitable exhortation was given to seven other Brethren who had not then belonged to the Synod, [Messrs John Muckarsie at Kinkell, Alexander Blyth at Kinclavin, David Wilson at Kircaldy, John Muligan at Orr, Matthew Moncrieff at Abernethy, William Moncrieff at Alloa, and John Goodlet at Sanquhar]; with fourteen other Elders, now present.—Messrs Andrew Arrot, John Cleland and Isaac Paton were absent from this meeting; with Mr Alexander Troup at Elgin.

This course of privy-censure took place, upon a motion made and agreed unto for that purpose; so that the members who underwent a rebuke and admonition rose up in several turns, and made voluntary acknowledgments,—none laying any thing to the charge of another: And the whole was concluded in a diet of confession and prayer,—relative to these sinful steps and compliances, staggerings and short-comings which had taken place among them. All which is particularly explained in the proceedings of the Synod at this time, which were afterwards published.

Nor was this the first time that they had become sensible of, and professed humiliation for the evils now acknowledged by them: As they had been generally employed the same way, on several occasions formerly;—in a diet of confession and prayer at their first sederunt after the breach, and in a Synodical fast on the Tuesday then following, as also in a diet of confession and prayer before the first procedure to censure,—beside the acknowledgments made by some brethren at their return to the Synod; all represented in the foregoing state of their procedure.—But they thought it proper, at this time, to have these matters particularly brought forth and proceeded upon as above; for the glory of God,—and for self-abasement, suited to the humbling work now among their hands: And as a standing testimony against these falls and failings which they had been left to, through heaviness of spirit and darkness about their way.

II. In
II. In six sederunts, on this and the following week,—the Synod resumed conference and reasoning, about further procedure in the case of the separating Brethren: All which issued in the following resolution, viz. “The Synod considering, that the censures formerly inflicted upon the separating Brethren are not sufficient, or proportioned unto their scandal and offence, in case of their continued contumacy; they therefore resolve to enter, at their next meeting, upon the question about inflicting the highest censure of the Church upon all or some of them,—and to endeavour, as the Lord shall be graciously pleased to direct, the coming to an issue in the said question at that time.”

III. On the first week of their meeting in August thereafter, and in consequence of reasoning at two sederunts,—“The Synod considering some special aggravations in the case of Messrs Ralph Erskine, late Minister at Dunfermline, James Fisher at Glasgow, and William Hutton at Stow; from what appears in the process lately published, particularly as to Mr Hutton,—and from its being notour, that the first two of these Brethren were all along more especially the instruments of the present defection, in the course of the debate relative thereto at the several meetings of Synod, before the breach in April 1747: They therefore did and hereby do resolve to proceed at this meeting of Synod, unto the inflicting of the highest censure of the Church upon all the said three Brethren. And moreover, upon a further motion for that purpose,—the Synod agreed in resolving to proceed unto the inflicting of the same censure upon all the rest of the separating Brethren, at next ordinary meeting of Synod, who shall be then found persisting in their contumacy.” And, at next sederunt,—“They agreed, and hereby do resolve, that the awful censure of the Greater Excommunication shall be passed against the said three Brethren at the forenoon’s sederunt on Wednesday next week; in case they shall not prevent the same, by their application to the Synod on or before that day.”

IV. Upon the said day, August 9th,—the sentence of the GREATER EXCOMMUNICATION was accordingly passed
Of the final procedure upon the Libel. Period III.

sed against these three Brethren: And next day, after a sermon suitable unto the occasion,—this sentence was solemnly PRONOUNCED by the Moderator, in verbis de praesenti; as Intimation was likewise appointed to be made of it, within the several congregations to which these Brethren formerly belonged.

V. At a sederunt on the first week of their meeting, in February 1750,—upon a motion made concerning the rest of the separating Brethren, “The Synod did and hereby do agree unto the said motion: And they resolve accordingly,—that the sentence of the Greater Excommunication shall be passed, at the forenoon’s sederunt on Wednesday next week, against all the said Brethren, [viz. Messrs Ebenezer Erskine late Minister at Stirling, James Mair at Linton, David Horn at Cambusnethan, Henry Erskine at Falkirk, John McCara at Burntshields, Andrew Black at Cumbernauld, James Johnston at Dundee, John Smith at Jedburgh, and David Telfer at Monteith]; in case all or any of them shall not prevent the same, by an application to the Synod on or before that day.”

And upon the said day, February 14th,—the sentence of the GREATER EXCOMMUNICATION was accordingly passed against these nine Brethren; an Intimation whereof was appointed to be made, within the several congregations to which they formerly belonged. And next day, after a sermon suitable unto the occasion,—this sentence was solemnly PRONOUNCED by the Moderator, in verbis de praesenti.

VI. The Highest Censure now inflicted upon all the separating Brethren, at this and the former meeting,—did run in the following terms, viz. “The Synod considering the several matters of heinous sin and scandal, which were found relevant and proven, at the meeting of Synod in April 1748, against the said———; with the awful contumacy of all the said persons, as hitherto persisted in after the censures that have been already inflicted for reclaiming them;—and likewise considering some passages of the Holy Scripture, and of our Confession of Faith; particularly [Matth. xviii. 17, 18. 1 Cor. v. 4, 5. 1 Tim. i. 19, 20. Tit. iii. 10.—Conf. chap. xxx. Art. 3, 4.]: They therefore DID and HEREBY DO (in the name and by the authority of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, “the
Period III. Of the final procedure upon the Libels.

“the only King and Head of his Church, and according to the powers committed by HIM to them as a court constitute in his name) actually EXCOMMUNICATE the said———, with the GREATER EXCOMMUNICATION; casting them out from the communion of the Church of CHRIST, declaring them to be of those whom the LORD CHRIST commandeth to be holden by all and every one of the faithful as Heathen men and Publicans,—and delivering them unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that their spirits may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus*.”

VII. The Synod, in this whole affair, have essayed to proceed with due tenderness and deliberation; in a dependence upon the Lord.—Their coming to inflict the highest censure, was not till the case of scandal had been of betwixt two and three years standing, as a desolating plague in the witnessing body; and after having dealt otherwise through all that time for reclaiming the offenders, without success. They have been observing a gradation of censure in the case; with express and public certification, upon each step, as to the next following. After the certification was given, about their proceeding to the higher Excommunication; before they actually proceeded thereto, there were three public fasts of Synodical appointment through all their congregations,—with a particular relation to this matter: Beside diets of humiliation and prayer, at three different meetings of Synod. When thus a full year was passed, after giving out the certification; their procedure was only with three of the separating brethren at first. Their procedure with the rest of them, has been in the way of waiting another half year; and after another public fast, beside another day of humiliation and prayer at the opening of this meeting: With certification all along,—about the Synod’s proceeding against all the rest of them at this very time, if not prevented. And as the matter has been managed in a way of prayer and conference, at each meeting of Synod all along; so the actual inflicting of that awful censure, at this and the foregoing

*These terms (from 1 Cor. v. 5.) belong to the form of the Higher Excommunication, as agreed upon by the General Assembly 1707; in the Form of Process.
Of the Higher Excommunication.

Period III.

foregoing meeting,—has been in the way of resolving on the first week, to inflict the same on the second week of their meeting: With solemn diets of prayer in behalf of the offenders; at public worship on the intervening Lord’s day, and at a sederunt on Tuesday following.—And thus the Synod was endeavouring faithfulness, as to the truth which the Lord had committed unto them; in the Scriptural way of expressing love and dutifulness toward their offending brethren.

Article V. Of the HIGHER EXCOMMUNICATION.

The only Minister of the Associate Synod who struck out against their procedure to the Highest Censure, was Mr Patrick Matthew*. On the first week of their meeting in February 1750, he gave in a Dissent with Reasons; and, on the second week, Answers made to these reasons were approved of: All which (by the Synod’s appointment) was soon afterwards published; along with the other proceedings of Synod, at this and their two meetings last year, relative to the case of the separating brethren.—There cannot be room here, for a particular explanation and vindication of that divine ordinance: But a few general observations upon the subject are now to be made; mostly gathered from the aforesaid Answers, as they had some notes added to them in the publication. And,

I. It was the doctrine of the Church of Scotland, in the days of her first reformation,—that “as no city, town, house or family, can maintain their estate and prosper, without policy and governance; even so the Church of God, which requireth more purely to be governed than any city or family,—cannot, without spiritual policy and ecclesiastical discipline, continue, increase and flourish:

*He afterwards broke off from the Synod, on the side of the separating brethren; and, after a course of process, had the same censure inflicted upon him in May 1751.—Only one Elder struck out (at the meeting in August 1749) by voting not: One who had not been in the Synod before, nor had read the former proceedings then published. But, at next sederunt, he expressed his desire, “That he may be looked upon as one who was not in case to vote on either side.”
“flourish:  And as the word of God is the life and soul of this Church, so this godly order and discipline is as it were the sinews in the body; which knit and join the members together, with decent order and comeliness*.”

To the same purpose, a famous divine† expressed himself as follows, *viz*. “The necessity and equity of discipline, beside the divine institution, is gathered from the nature of the things itself. For if no society, yea no house, can be kept in a right state, without discipline; this is evidently much more necessary in the Church, the state whereof ought to be most orderly. Therefore whoever would have the discipline taken away, or hinder the restoring or exercise thereof, they seek the dispersing of the Church. For what would matters turn to, if every one had a licence to do what he pleased? Discipline therefore is the foundation of order, and the bond of unity.”

And all this holds, with respect to the *highest censure* of the Church, when others prove ineffectual.—For as no earthly kingdom can have a reality and vigour of government, or their King be firmly seated on his throne; unless all trouble of the common good, especially such as have public trust,—be under a necessity of submitting, or of being at length put out of the society, without any midst betwixt the two: Much more it must belong to the reality and vigour of our Lord’s kingly government in the visible Church,—that there should be no midst betwixt a submitting to his institutions, or a being at length cut off from the actual fellowship of that visible body over which he reigns; as otherways the glory of his visible kingdom, and the faithfulness of his subjects, could not subsist.

II. The discipline of the Church, particularly as to the *Greater Excommunication*,—is not of man, but of God. It is an ordinance of divine institution; and the terms thereof are not of man’s devising, but prescribed by the Spirit of God: So that the question must not be about man’s meaning, but about the meaning of the holy Spirit upon

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*The book of Common Order, or the order of the English Kirk at Geneva, whereof John Knox was Minister; received and used by the reformed Kirk of Scotland. Chap. vii.

†Turret. Theolog. Vol. 3. Loc. 18. Quest. 32.
this head.—Our Lord has laid down an ordinary and standing rule of discipline, in Matth. xviii. 15,—18. According to this rule the case of any brother, who is chargeable with such obstinacy, even in any private offence, as not to hear the Church (the judicative Church) when the case is regularly declared to them,—is to be proceeded upon to the Greater Excommunication. The terms are, Let him be (not really in himself, but relatively) unto thee as an heathen man and a publican: That is,—as such persons were, he is to be abstained from; with respect to all acts of religious fellowship, and of voluntary familiar intercourse. And this censure doth essentially suppose the case of the person to have become, in all present appearance and human probability, a desperate case.

The Apostle Paul (in 1 Cor. v. 4, 5. 1 Tim. i. 20.) gives examples of the Higher Excommunication in two different cases: And though, in one of these, it was inflicted immediately by his own Apostolical authority; yet, in the other, it was prescribed to be inflicted (as it came to be) by the Church of Corinth. One was a breach of the first, and another a breach of the second table of the law: Both of them turning out to the public dishonour of God, and the public scandal of the Church; the one striking against the doctrines of faith, and the other against the power of godliness. And here was a precedent, in general, for that awful censure,—with respect to all those breaches, either of the first or second table of the law, which are openly dishonouring to God and scandalous to the Church; being of a wasting and desolating nature, as to the purity of faith and the power of godliness: Being also contumaciously persisted in.

The terms which the Apostle used (to deliver unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus) cannot mean a miraculous inflicting of some tormenting pain or punishment upon the man’s body; or an extraordinary permission given to Satan, in that matter. For, if it had been any work of this sort,—the Apostle could not blame the Corinthians, as he did, for not having wrought it sooner; while no such thing was competent to them: He could not seek the concurrence or assistance of the Corinthians, as he did, for working it:

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He could not have called it, (as he did, 2 Cor. ii. 6.)—This punishment (or judicial censure, as the original word signifies) which was inflicted of many: And he could not have mentioned a hazard of being swallowed up with over-much sorrow (2 Cor. ii. 7.) as the proper effect of the censure; without taking any notice of it, as having had any tormenting effect on the man’s body.—It was not therefore any destruction of his body, but of his fleshly corruptions, that the Apostle meant. And the censure proved subservient to this end, not according to any human probability that it might be so, (the case being desperate in this respect); but through the Lord’s being graciously pleased to bless it, as a mean of his own institution for that purpose: While the mean was to be used, amidst all improbability of such an effect,—with a reference of it to divine sovereignty.

As the Divine already quoted observes,—“The delivering unto Satan cannot be better applied, than to Excommunication and its effects. The reason of the expression is taken from this; that he who is cast without the Church, and hereby deprived of the proper benefits of the Church,—is left exposed to the tyranny and temptations of the devil, who reigns without the Church: Thus Paul would better hold forth, how terrible a thing it is, to be cast out from the society of the Church.”—And, as he further observes; “Hereby obstinate heretics, troublers of the peace of the Church, scandalous and incorrigible transgressors,—if they persist in their contumacy and rebellion, are cast out of the Church: That they should not have fellowship, with the rest of the faithful, in any religious exercise. Which ought not to be extended unto civil society, or the mere offices of charity and morality,—or those which are otherwise incumbent and necessary, from our calling in a civil or family capacity: As if wives, children, servants and subjects, were restricted from performing what duties are incumbent upon them by the law of nature,—towards their husbands, parents, masters and princes, who are excommunicated. For Excommunication cannot break those bonds of nature and morality, whereby men are mutually held together: But this separation ought only to

“be
“be extended to those parts of conversation, which appear to infer a connivance or approbation*.”

Moreover, the Apostle gives a special direction (Gal. v. 12.) for applying the general and ordinary rule of discipline (Matth. xviii. 17.),—to the particular and extraordinary case of public breaches and backslidings in the Church, such as the present: While he says, *I would they were even cut off which trouble you.*—The Apostle was plainly pointing the Church of Galatia, by this passage, unto an exercise of their own ordinary Church-power; beside any extraordinary or Apostolical power which he might exercise, or had already exercised about that case,—as in chap. i. 8, 9. And he distinguishes the *troublers* from the *troubled*; while yet their being *troubled* was in the way of being *bewitched from an obeying of the truth*, (chap. iii. 1.),—so that they were in some measure led, by these troublers, into a backsliding course. And it also appears, that even the *judicative* Church in Galatia was at that time so far disordered by these troublers, as to be indisposed for the present discharge of their duty in cutting them off. But these words of the Apostle, *I would they were even cut off which trouble you*, if they have any sense at all, must signify,—that it was the *duty* of the Church, to proceed in such a manner against these *troublers*; as being the declared will of the Apostle, and of the Spirit of God by him: And that however soon the said Church should become reconciled to and disposed for the discharge of their duty, in the executing of that awful censure; it would be no sooner than what the Apostle, and the Spirit of God by him, wanted to have it done.

III. The *Greater Excommunication*, as all other ecclesiastical censures,—is an ordinance of the visible Church, and of that only: And so, it only respects the outward or visible character or state of Church-members; not their inward or invisible state or character. It proceeds only upon visible grounds, such as men can take a cognizance of; without presuming to search or judge a person’s heart. And as it doth not cast a person out of the *Invisible Church*, nor meddles with his State therein,—so neither doth it cast him out of the *Visible Church Catholic*; as if it were

*Turret. Theolog. ubi supra.*
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a cutting him off (not merely from a state of actual fellowship, but) from a state of membership therein, depriving him of the Christian name: For, in this respect, he is still a Brother, 2 Thess. iii. 15.

Accordingly Mr Rutherford teaches, that “God may judge some worthy of eternal life in Christ,—and yet they are to be Excommunicated, if they refuse to hear the Church; as many regenerate may go that far in scandalous obstinacy*.”—To the same purpose Mr Marshal writes, viz.

“Excommunication cuts off actual communion only, until repentance be evidenced; and not absolutely aboliseth the title and relation of a brother and church-member: Though it judgeth one to be an unnatural brother, and a pernicious rotten member at present; not fit for acts of communion. The Church reacheth forth a hand to help such a person, tho’ it doth not join hands in fellowship with him, 2 Thess. iii. 15†.”—And Mr Durham, speaking of Excommunicating the erroneous, says,—

“It may be questioned, What if the person be godly, or accounted so? Answ. If it be scandalous in a gracious man, is not the same remedy to be used for the Church’s good?—The mistake is in this, that Excommunication is not looked upon as an ordinance of Christ; useful, through his blessing, for humbling and reclaiming a sinner, more than if it were not applied: Whereas, if it were looked upon as medicinal in its own kind, it would not be so constructed of‡.”

And this part of the subject may be concluded, by another quotation from an author twice already referred to, viz.

“This ejection from the Church,—as to the outward state, denotes a real separation from the external communion of the Church, and the use of holy things; yet not perpetual, but for a time, until the person repent. But, as to the inward state, it is not a real expulsion from the mystical body of Christ; for he who is once taken into that body, can never be cast out of it:

“But


†On Sanctification, Direct. 13.
‡Treatise concerning Scandal, Part 3. Chap. 2.
“But it is only a threatening or declaration of the intrinsic demerit of the fault.—Wherefore we are not immediately to think, that by Excommunication an offender is simply and absolutely cut off from the body of Christ: For often one ceases not to be a member of the Church in secret, and as to the inward state; though, according to external discipline, he be for a time removed from the society of the faithful*.”

IV. The scriptural ordinance of discipline, particularly as to the Higher Excommunication, has been properly acknowledged and maintained in the reformed Churches.—According to our Confession of Faith, [chap. xxx. § 3.], “Church censures are necessary for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren; for deterring others from the like offences; for purging out that leaven which might infect the whole lump; for vindicating the honour of Christ, and the holy profession of the Gospel.” And we are taught (chap. xx. § 4.)—that “they who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it;—publishing such opinions or maintaining such practices, as are contrary to the light of Nature, or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship or conversation,—or to the power of godliness; or such erroneous opinions or practices as, either in their own nature or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the Church: They may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the Church.”

It is upon Obstinacy in such offences as expose to Church-discipline, that the highest censure is to be proceeded unto. Accordingly, the order of Excommunication (used in the Church of Scotland under her first reformation) bears,—that “a small offence may justly deserve Excommunication, by reason of the contempt and disobedience of the offender. Chap. II.—After that all admonitions, both private and public, be past, as before is said; then must the Church proceed to Excommunication, if the offen-

*Turret. Theolog. ubi supra.
“der remain obstinate.” Chap. iii.—And the second book of discipline bears (chap. vii.), That Church-Judicatories “have power to execute ecclesiastical discipline and punishment, upon all transgressors and proud contemners of the good order and policy of the Kirk;” and “power to Excommunicate the obstinate.”

In conformity to such rules, the General Assembly 1638 ordained procedure to Excommunication,—“against those Ministers—who refuse themselves, and withdraw others from the obedience of the acts of the Assembly;” As they likewise ordained to be put in execution, an act of Assembly 1569: “That those who will not forbear the company of excommunicate persons, after due admonition, be excommunicate themselves except they forbear.”——The Assembly 1640 ordained, “That such as have subscribed the Covenant and speak against the same, if he be a Minister, shall be deprived; and if he continue so, being deprived, shall be Excommunicate.”——And the Assembly 1648 ordained as follows; “That whosoever, after the sentence of deposition pronounced against them, do exercise any part of the ministerial calling,—shall be proceeded against with Excommunication; And if any suspended Minister exercise any part of the ministerial calling, that he be deposed; and after deposition, continuing in the fault, that he be processed with Excommunication.”

In like manner, it was directed by the discipline of the reformed Church of France, (chap. v. art. 31.),—That process should issue in the Higher Excommunication, against one or more of the people who should keep up a debate for breaking the unity of the Church; upon any point of doctrine or discipline, or public worship and order. And the same course is more especially prescribed (Art. 32.),—for being taken with a Minister or Elder who should be guilty this way, upon any such point; in contrariety to his former engagements.——Moreover, the National Synod of that once famous Church, anno 1565, determined in general,—as to faults which cannot be got corrected privately, or faults which are public; that they are to be gradually proceeded against “even to Excommunication if the person be rebellious, continuing “obstinate
“obstinate and impenitent.” And they ordained, anno 1614,—
“That these who oppose themselves to the execution of the
resolutions of the General and Provincial Assemblies, shall be
pursued by all sort of Church-censures.”

For a close of this head, another example of the same
nature may be added. By an act of a General Synod of the
reformed Churches of Poland and Lithuania, 1583,—“It is
concluded, according to the divine decrees in the holy
Scriptures and the constitutions of our godly Synods, that
Church-discipline be in earnest and without fail exercised
against” contemners of admonitions and discipline; “with
Excommunication of the obstinate;” And another General
Synod of these Churches, anno 1593, determined,—That such
as should break their concord, and would not keep agreement
with them in their attainments of Reformation, should be
actually Excommunicated without any delay*.

V. In the case now under consideration, the Associate
Synod had to stand forth on the Lord’s side,—in opposition to
a woful prejudice and wrath that was swelling and bursting out
among many, against the discipline of his house; and his
express institution, as to the full exercise of the same: The
impartial and vigorous exercise of it being gone so far out of
sight with this generation, that people are ready to be frighted
at it,—as at a ghost; or at one rising out of his grave, after
being long buried. There is indeed a terror about this
ordinance of Zion’s King, for making all to stand in awe and
stoop before him. But it cannot agree with a worshipping at
his holy hill,—to be loading that sacred institution with any
odious sort of terror; for making it an object of hatred or
detestation, instead of reverence and holy fear: As if the
display of our Lord’s authority and holiness, in opposition to a
proud advance of heinous sin and scandal among professors,
were thereby carried somewhat too far; though yet this
ordinance of Christ is among the means of salvation which he
has instituted.

The Lord was on this occasion, giving the Synod a loud
call,—to guard against consulting with flesh and blood:

*Syntagma Confessionum, Pars 2. Pag. 310, 322.
But to study much humility, tenderness and care,—as to the holding fast his name; and the having his royal standard and sword properly displayed,—in opposition to the woful insurrection carried on against his Cause and Testimony, and against the appearances which he had made among us for the building of Zion: Lest otherwise the Lord should have been grievously provoked; as he once sought to slay Moses in the inn,—for the leaving of something undone, which a carnal eye might have looked upon as unseasonable or not very urgent.

The Churches of Christ have considered all cases of scandal, without any exception of persons or kinds, if they be really scandals, publicly dishonouring to the Lord and prejudicial or troublesome to the Church,—as what may be proceeded against unto the Higher Excommunication, if still contumaciously persisted in: According to the plain rule for ordinary cases, (in Matth. xviii. 17); and according to the peculiar application which the Apostle makes of that rule (Gal. v. 12.), unto the extraordinary case of public breaches and backslidings in the Church.—It is evident, from the instances which have been given, that it was a common thing among them to ordain the Higher Excommunication,—not only in cases which comprehend, or are very parallel unto the present; but also in cases which were, in themselves, of far less consequence: And herein they walked according to plain Scripture-institution. For the rule given by our Lord doth plainly allow,—that an offence which can justly issue at length in this awful censure, may at first be any sort of offence, even between two persons only: And the special application which the Apostle makes of that rule, doth turn in general upon the point of troubling the Church; so as it equally takes in all cases of that nature.—The Scripture-institution of discipline, in the procedure thereof to the highest censure, (which is not designed for strangers, but for Church-members and brethren as such),—cannot admit of any distinctions or limitations; about the different sorts of scandals in themselves considered, or the different sorts of persons chargeable therewith. But a contumacious persevering in whatever offence, or whatev-
ver troubling of the Church, by whatever Church-members,—
doth lay a foundation for the highest censure; so that any case
which can admit the lowest censure of the Church, can equally
admit the highest censure thereof,—if unrelenting contumacy
be superadded: Wherefore all distinctions or limitations to the
contrary, however plausibly set off, are but mere human
inventions.

However, in the present case,—no Inconsiderableness of
the offence, as to its real nature, could be justly pretended;
considering the aggravated and complex nature of the scandals
which had been found proven, upon the articles of the Libel.—
—The course of the separating brethren was manifestly
subversive of the faith; so far as the faith of the Lord’s people
is concerned with Scripture-doctrine about the most solemn
oaths: And with Scripture-doctrine about being bound in
conscience to hold fast the received Testimony for Truth, in
opposition to prevailing errors and corruptions; and also about
due faithfulness, in the not suffering sin to lie upon a brother.
Their course was manifestly destructive to the power of
godliness; so far as the power of godliness is concerned with a
keeping of the Lord’s way, and still cleaving unto him,—in
opposition to the woful backslidings of the time. And their
course had a sad influence for subverting that order, unity and
peace, which Christ hath established in his Church; and for
marring the edification of the Body, yea for overthrowing the
same and the Lord’s work among them,—unto the grievous
dishonour of his name: While they persisted in all this course
with obdured contumacy, as public snares to the generation.—
—The scandal was nothing less, than a contumacious
procedure in troubling the Church: Even for overturning the
whole state of the present Testimony, with the most solemn
Covenant-engagements thereunto,—which the Lord had
graciously brought forth among us, in this day of grievous
backsliding; and so, for dissolving the whole frame of a
witnessing Church-body through Britain and Ireland.

In a word,—the Synod was now led to an endeavour for
having the credit and due vigour of the ordinances of Christ
restored, as to the discipline of his House: And
for having his Royal Banner suitably displayed, in opposition to the present woful apostasy; and to the new ensigns which were displayed against his work,—for carrying us back to that Egypt of defection, from which the Lord had brought forth a witnessing body with an outstretched arm.

Progression II. Concerning Mr Thomas Nairn, and others who took part with him.

Section I. Of the Synod’s Procedure against Mr Thomas Nairn.

I. A Secession having been made from the Associate Presbytery, in February 1743, by Mr Thomas Nairn then Minister at Abbotshall,—in consequence of his adopting a new scheme of principles about Magistracy; all which has been particularly explained in the first Volume of this Display: The Presbytery then gave a certification concerning him, as there also set forth; “That unless Mr Nairn retract the principles vented by him, “that tend to overthrow Civil Magistracy, they will proceed against him according to the rules of the Church.”

II. His Secession was partly upon a difference with the Presbytery, about their method of renewing our Solemn Covenants: But the proper rise and leading ground of it was, their principles about the present Civil Government; of which, in answer to him, they made a large declaration and defence,—contained in the preceding Volume.

The following principles (among others) are there proven to be plainly founded upon the word of God, and agreeable to the confessions of all the reformed Churches, and particularly to the known principles of this Church in her Confession and Covenants, viz. “That the Lord’s people ought to render subjection and obedience in all matters lawful*, not only for wrath but also for conscience-sake,—unto any Magistrate who is, and while he is acknowledged as such, by the civil state they belong to; being what is every way consistent, yea connected

“with

*The word lawful is to be considered, in the present case, as respecting the law of GOD.
their hands, through their sides. By the fire proceeding out of their mouth, must be understood their declaration and dispensation of the Lord’s word and ordinances,—in the exercise of the keys of the kingdom of heaven; which cannot exclude but must include the exercise of discipline, where there is ground and access for the same. And as the devouring and killing here mentioned, must be understood in an ecclesiastical and spiritual sense; so it cannot exclude, but must include the spiritual execution which is done by and follows upon the discipline of the Lord’s house. Now, the party upon whom they are warranted and authorised to do spiritual execution, particularly by this ordinance of discipline,—is, any man who will hurt them: ANY MAN, whosoever he be or whencesoever he come, IF he will hurt THEM; by actual thrusting himself into their way,—to insult, impede and injure them, in their witnessing capacity and administration. And indeed, to suppose that the power and authority of a witnessing court were not of such extent, in such a peculiar case,—so as to be insufficient for vindicating the honour of Christ, his cause, and his commission unto them, in some adequate proportion to the peculiar attack thereupon; would be most absurd, as well as unscriptural.

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Progression III. Concerning the Renovation of our Solemn Covenants in England and Ireland.

The Synod had under their consideration, upon the 5th of May 1752,—the case of renewing our Covenants, National and Solemn League, among their people in England and Ireland; as this work had then been gone about, through most of their congregations in Scotland: And they had now several congregations, under an Associate Presbytery,—in Ireland; with one congregation settled, and another about to be so,—in England.

Considering the call and occasion which the Lord was thus giving, for having the same work essayed among their people in England and Ireland; but considering also, that a particular enumeration of public sins and defections in these lands—could not be presently or speedily made
made out: They therefore agreed upon two general Paragraphs concerning the same,—for being inserted respectively in the acknowledgment of sins prefixed to the bond for renewing our covenants, immediately after the other public matters in that acknowledgment; and appointed that, in the mean time, the solemn work should be essayed among their people in these lands, according to the act of the Associate Presbytery for the same in Scotland,—with the addition of these two paragraphs, which here follow.

The PARAGRAPH relating to England.

All these evils above-mentioned, we desire to confess and mourn over before the Lord: In regard we are specially called to humiliation upon account of these evils in our neighbouring land, not only as many of them are likewise prevailing among us in this land; but also in respect of the Covenant union and uniformity of the three kingdoms,—as this sacred bond upon all the three kingdoms is wofully broken asunder and cast off, unto the great dishonour and provocation of the Lord, by the public defections in each kingdom; and considering likewise, that many of us are involved in the public guilt of our neighbouring land,—as being the natives thereof, or the near posterity of such natives. Moreover, we desire to confess and lament over it before the Lord, that though this land was early visited by the light of the glorious gospel; and afterwards priviledged with the Lord’s glorious appearances, in bringing us up out of the spiritual Egypt and Babylon of Popish darkness and idolatry: Yet there has never been a suitable improvement of those privileges, by all ranks, in a due turning to the Lord and his way. At the reformation from Popery, the Episcopal government of the Church was maintained; with many other dregs of Popish corruption and superstition, in their worship and discipline. And as there was afterwards a further prevalence and establishment of these abominations, especially for some years before the dawning of a Reformation from Prelacy in the last Century; so, many were brought under grievous oppressions and sufferings;—for their testifying against those evils, and endeavouring a further reformation. Likewise, though the Lord graciously brought forward unto a begun Reforma-
tion from *Prelacy*, and other evils, in the last century; yet grievous opposition was made unto that work, so that it was soon overthrown and extinguished,—by a flood of Sectarian errors and delusions, with the prevalence of a malignant spirit. Thus abjured *Prelacy*, with all those evils that accompany the same,—was restored and established, upon the ruins of a Covenanted-Reformation: And such as essayed to testify against it, or refused compliance therewith, were subjected to still more cruel oppressions and sufferings,—in the late times of tyranny and persecution. And though the Lord did mercifully deliver and preserve this land from the yoke of *Popery* and tyranny, at the late wonderful Revolution; yet there has been no turning to the Lord from all these evils and corruptions: But, on the contrary, the generation have held fast their iniquity,—and refused to be reformed. The land has been likewise overflown by new floods of errors, and apostasy from the truth of the gospel. Many gross heresies, subversive of divine revelation,—such a *Deism, Arianism, Arminianism*, and other errors,—have been spreading, and greatly entertained. Woful darkness prevails more and more; gospel ordinances are sadly corrupted, perverted and prostituted,—particularly by the *Sacramental Test*: And the generation is destroyed for lack of knowledge.

The PARAGRAPH relating to *Ireland*.

All these evils above-mentioned, we desire to confess and mourn over before the Lord: In regard we are specially called to humiliation upon account of these evils in our neighbouring land, not only as many of them are likewise prevailing among us in this land; but also in respect of the Covenant-union and uniformity of the three kingdoms,—as this sacred bond upon all the three kingdoms is wofully broken asunder and cast off, unto the great dishonour and provocation of the Lord, by the public defections in each kingdom; and considering likewise, that many of us are involved in the guilt of our neighbouring land,—as being the natives thereof, or the near posterity of such natives. Moreover we desire to confess and lament over it before the Lord, that though this land was early visited by the light of the glorious gospel,—and though the light of the Reformation from *Popery* has been also
Progression IV. Concerning various other Oaths and Obligations.

As they were providentially called, on several occasions, the Synod passed the following Acts; which, from the general coincidence of their nature, are here presented in one view.

I. Declaration concerning the clause of Civil Allegiance in some Burgess-oaths.

Edinburgh; August 6th, 1747.

WHEREAS there is a clause of Civil Allegiance in some Burgess-oaths, [viz. I shall be leal and true to our Sovereign Lord King George II, and his successors]; and whereas it is pretended, in the 8th reason of protest against the act of Synod concerning the religious clause of some Burgess-oaths,—that the question about this Allegiance, as to the lawfulness or unlawfulness thereof, has not yet been determined by the Synod; and whereas it is already notorious, that our received Testimony, upon the head of the Allegiance,—is come accordingly to be loaded and darkened, among many, with grievous misconstruction: Therefore the Synod did, and hereby do unanimously agree and declare,—that the foresaid clause of Allegiance in some Burgess-oaths, being materially the same, and of the same generality with the Allegiance imposed by Parliament in the year 1690; is, and ought to be considered as already determined, in our received Testimony, to be of the same unlawfulness with that Allegiance:—Because the reasoning in the Act and Testimony, as to the Allegiance in the year 1690, its coming into the room of our Covenant allegiance, does lean not only unto the act imposing the same,—but likewise unto the material nature of the oath itself, compared with the burial of our Covenant-allegiance by the act rescissory: And because in the Acknowledgment of Sins prefixed to the Bond for renewing our Covenants, the said Allegiance in the year 1690 is declared against for the generality thereof;
thereof; seeing a *General Allegiance* must necessarily be understood as deriving all its limitation, immediately from the standing constitutions and laws of the land,—and as therefore containing a general approbation of those constitutions and laws.

II. *Act concerning General Engagements of subjection and obedience in some Burgess-oaths.*

*Edinburgh; April 14th, 1749.*

THE Synod resuming the case of some Burgess-oaths which bear none of the clauses yet judged of by them; particularly having before them attested copies or narratives of the Burgess-oaths of Burntisland, Kinghorn, Kirkcaldy and Falkland,—which bear *general engagements* of subjection and obedience to the Magistrates of those respective burghs: And having maturely considered that affair, they unanimously agree.—That a general engagement of subjection and obedience to the Magistrates of a burgh, without a proper and distinct limitation which might salve and make it consistent with the present Testimony, doth coincide with the case of the *general Allegiance* to the Sovereign,—which hath been already determined by the Associate Presbytery and Synod:——So that these under the inspection of this Synod cannot further, with safety of conscience and without sin, involve themselves in any Burgess-oaths bearing such a general engagement, in this period of defection; while they are justly and necessarily engaged otherwise in a public Testimony against prevailing evils of the Civil State, as well as of the Church: And moreover, that those under the inspection of this Synod who have formerly been involved in any such oaths, particularly of the burghs above-mentioned,—ought before their admission into the bond for renewing our Covenants, to be dealt with as hath been already prescribed in the act about the religious clause of some Burgess-oaths.

III. *Act*
III. Act concerning the Oaths imposed upon Constables and Church-wardens in England and Ireland, and concerning the Bishops-courts.

Edinburgh; March 4th, 1752: Ante meridiem.

There was laid before the Synod by the Brethren of the Presbytery in Ireland, the case of some difficulties they are under,—as to how far it may be warrantable for the people under their inspection to engage in the Constable-oath and Church warden-oath, when called thereto; as also to acknowledge or take the benefit of the Bishops-courts, with respect to the confirmation of testaments or other causes: And to make the usual payments, for the support of the Episcopal Church established by law in that kingdom. At the same time two Brethren, whose congregations reach within the English border,—represented the necessity of considering upon the same things, with respect to Seceders in England.

Copies of the afore-mentioned oaths having been read, and some time having been spent in reasoning upon the whole subject; the Synod agreed to proceed first unto a judgment upon the affair of the Oaths and Bishops-courts. After some further reasoning, with prayer for light and direction in the case; the Synod agreed unanimously in finding,—That the people under the inspection of this Synod, in England and Ireland, cannot, with safety of conscience and without sin, engage in either of the foresaid oaths: Because the Constable-oath is of a very unlimited nature,—as containing a general allegiance to the Sovereign, and a general compliance with the laws of the land in the execution of that office,—without proper and necessary limitations; and because the Church-warden-oath doth expressly reduplicate upon some articles of presentment, which plainly imply an approving of and concurring with the superstitions of the Episcopal Church. And moreover they find,—That the people under their inspection cannot warrantably in conscience, and in a consistency with their profession, acknowledge or take the benefit of the Bishops-courts in any causes; as this behoved to imply an homologating of an ecclesiastical constitution in those courts, with the civil places and power of Kirk-men.

IV. Act
IV. Act concerning Church-payments, in England and Ireland.

Period III. Of Church-payment in England and Ireland. 125

Eodem die, post meridiem.

The Synod resumed further consideration of the affair relating to various payments, required by the order of civil society in England and Ireland; particularly from some people there, who are under the inspection of this Synod: Which payments are applied for supporting the Episcopal Churches there, in their present state of corruption and superstition. After some time spent in reasoning and deliberation upon this subject, with prayer for light and direction in the case; the Synod agreed in declaring,—That though the afore-mentioned payments are applied for the support of manifold corruptions and superstitions in those Episcopal Churches, which we are essaysing to testify against,—and which all ranks of persons in these lands ought to be humbled for before the Lord, as being deep causes of his wrath against and controversy with them: Yet the Synod do not find a relevant ground for scruple of conscience, about submitting to civil authority in the foresaid payments; as if this could imply any homologation of the foresaid corruptions and superstitions, or of what application is made of those payments unto the support thereof;—while the payers are openly engaged in a public testimony against the same, and are not suppressed in the maintenance of that Testimony, but are protected in the exercise of their civil and religious liberties; and the said payments are made, only in compliance with the common order of society*.

V. Act

*As hath been observed elsewhere,—persons may reckon themselves safe in point of conscience, to comply with all simple payments (that is, payments without any concomitant declaration of consent to the uses made thereof) according to the civil order of society, whether statute or common law; in any country where they are enjoying the benefit of government, (no way like the case of our late sufferers, who were thrown out from the protection of government,—and yet were required to pay a cess, for the express purpose of hiring soldiers to kill them): Without reckoning themselves any way answerable for the government’s application thereof; while they are otherwise studying honesty, with respect to public corruptions.

What of a person’s substance is required by common or statute-law, or by the common order of civil society,—cannot be reckoned his own;
V.  Act concerning the Constable oath in Scotland.

Edinburgh; August 12th, 1752.

The Synod having had laid before them, by their committee for overtures,—an overture about giving direction to such of their people in Scotland, as come to be imposed upon to take the Constable oath; and understanding that severals of them in different corners have of late been suffering imprisonments and finings, for refusing to take the said oath; and finding by the report of some brethren, that this trial is now like to become more general among their people: The Synod, after due deliberation and reasoning, unanimously agreed in this direction to the people under their inspection; That they cannot, with safety of conscience, and consistently with their witnessing profession, take the said Constable oath:—Because this oath is altogether unlimited, with respect to whatever is required of them in that office, according to the laws of the land; notwithstanding the various corruptions thereof which we testify against, concerning the state of religion and of a Covenanted Reformation: And because the oath is equally unlimited, with respect to whatever precepts or warrants may be directed to them from the justices of the peace. And as the Synod advise, that their people should study the exercise of Christian meekness and patience under any sufferings for conscience-sake, because of their refusal to engage in the said oath; so they recommend unto their people in different corners,—to comfort and sympathise with their brethren under such sufferings, according to their

more than the rent which is in a tenant’s hand can be reckoned his own: And consequently, the payment of it can no more infer an approbation of the uses to which it is applied by those to whom it is paid,—than a tenant’s payment of his rent can infer an approbation of the debauched uses which perhaps his master makes of it.

Hard exactions were made on the Israelites in Egypt; and what of their effects or workmanship they were obliged to give up, was no doubt partly applied to the worst of uses: But this was considered as their affliction; and their submission to such exactions was never charged on them as their sin. The Israelites likewise paid heavy taxes, under the Babylonish captivity; which no doubt were partly applied to the worst uses of Heathen idolatry: And they complained of this as a heavy trial, [Neh. ix. 36, 37.]; but they never confessed it as their transgression.
Period III. Of the Chapman oath.

their abilities and opportunities. And the Synod appoint, that extracts of this act be transmitted to the Sessions; to be recorded in their minutes, for the due information of all concerned.

VI. Act concerning the Chapman-oath.

**Edinburgh; August 14th, 1754.**

The Synod had laid before them, by their committee for bills, a reference from the Associate Presbytery of Glasgow, of a reference from the Associate Session of Glasgow; bearing, That three persons, members of the Associate Congregation of Glasgow, had given in a petition to the Session there,—setting forth, That having been sometime ago incorporated with the Chapmen in Stirling-shire, each of them had an Oath administered to them at their entry, which, upon after reflection, had given them some uneasiness of mind; and craving to have their case considered: And that these persons, at the same time, informed the Session in writing,—that the swearer was bound by the said oath to defend the whole laws, rights and privileges of the said society of Chapmen;—though some of these laws, upon all which the oath reduplicates, are not read or made known till after the oath is administered; and though several of the articles are very trifling, improper to be made the subject of a solemn oath,—such as a prohibition of the members to eat any kind of victuals in the market place; and though, as to others, they have no power to prosecute them: And that, in the admission of members, there is a practice of pouring spirits on the intrant’s head,—when the oath is administered to him.

The Synod, after due deliberation and reasoning, unanimously agreed in judging,—that the aforesaid oath is sinful: And in appointing,—that all under their inspection who are involved in that oath, shall attend their respective Sessions; for signifying their satisfaction with the present judgment of the Synod, and a sense of their sin in having taken such an oath.

VII. Act
VII. *Act concerning the Mason-oath.*

*Edinburgh, August 25th, 1757.*

Whereas an oath is one of the most solemn acts of religious worship, which ought to be taken only upon important and necessary occasions; and to be sworn in truth, in judgment and in righteousness,—without any mixture of sinful, profane, or superstitious devices:

And whereas the Synod had laid before them, in their meeting at Stirling on the 7th of March 1745, an overture concerning the *Mason-oath*; bearing, that there were very strong presumptions, that among *Masons* an oath of secrecy is administered to intrants into their society, even under a capital penalty, and before any of those things which they swear to keep secret be revealed to them,—and that they pretend to take some of these secrets from the *Bible*; beside other things which are ground of scruple, in the manner of swearing the said oath: And therefore overturing, that the Synod would consider the whole affair; and give directions, with respect to the admission of persons engaged in that oath—to sealing ordinances.

And whereas the Synod, in their meeting at Stirling on the 26th of September 1745, remitted the overture concerning the Mason-oath to the several Sessions subordinate to them; for their proceeding therein, as far as they should find practicable,—according to our received and known principles, and the plain rules of the Lord’s work and sound reason:

And whereas the Synod, in their meeting at Edinburgh on the 6th of March 1755, when a particular cause about the Mason-oath was before them,—did appoint all the Sessions under their inspection, to require all persons in their respective congregations—who are presumed or suspected to have been engaged in that oath, to make a plain acknowledgment whether or not they have ever been so; and to require that such as they may find to have been engaged therein, should give ingenuous answers to what further inquiry the Sessions may see cause to make, concerning the tenor and administration of the said oath to them; and that the Sessions should proceed to the purg-
ing of what scandal they may thus find those persons convicted of; according to the directions of the above-mentioned act of Synod in September 1745:

And whereas the generality of the Sessions have, since the afore-mentioned periods, dealt with several persons under their inspection about the Mason-oath; in the course of which procedure, by the confessions made to them,—they have found others, beside those of the Mason craft, to be involved in that oath: And the Synod finding it proper and necessary, to give more particular directions to the several Sessions,—for having the heinous profanation of the Lord’s name, by that oath, purged out of all the congregations under their inspection:——

Therefore the Synod did, and hereby do appoint,—that the several Sessions subordinate to them, in dealing with persons about the Mason-oath, shall particularly interrogate them; If they have taken that oath, and when and where they did so? If they have taken the said oath, or declared their approbation of it, oftener than once; upon being admitted to a higher degree in a Mason-lodge? If that oath was not administered to them, without letting them know the terms of it—till in the act of administering the same to them? If it was not an oath binding them to keep a number of secrets, none of which they were allowed to know before swearing the oath? If, beside a solemn invocation of the Lord’s name in that oath, it did not contain a capital penalty; about having their tongues and hearts taken out, in case of breaking the same? If the said oath was not administered to them with several superstitious ceremonies; such as, the striping them of, or requiring them to deliver up, any thing of metal which they had upon them,—and making them kneel upon their right knee bare, holding up their right arm bare, with their elbow upon the Bible, or with the Bible laid before them,—or having the Bible, as also the square and compasses, in some particular way applied to their bodies? And if, among the secrets which they were bound by that oath to keep, there was not a passage of scripture read to them (particularly 1 Kings vii. 21.), with or without some explication put upon the same; for being concealed?

Moreover,
Moreover, the Synod appoint,—that the several Sessions shall call before them all persons in their congregations who are of the Mason-craft, and others whom they may have a particular suspicion of as being involved in the Mason-oath,—except such as have been already dealt with, and have given satisfaction upon that head; and that, upon their answering the first of the foregoing questions in the affirmative, the Sessions shall proceed to put the other interrogatories before appointed: As also, that all persons of the Mason-craft applying for sealing ordinances, and likewise others concerning whom there may be any presumption of their having been involved in the Mason-oath,—shall be examined by the Ministers, if they have been so; and upon their acknowledging the same, or declining to answer whether or not,—the Ministers shall refer them to be dealt with by the Sessions, before admitting them to these ordinances: And that all such persons, offering themselves to the Sessions for joining in Covenanting-work,—shall be then examined by the Sessions, as to their concern in the aforesaid Oath.

And the Synod further appoint, that when persons are found to be involved in the Mason-oath,—according to their confessions in giving plain and particular answers to the foregoing questions, and professing their sorrow for the same; the said scandal shall be purged by a Sessional rebuke and admonition,—with a strict charge to abstain from all concern afterward in administring the said oath to any, or enticing any into that snare, and from all practices of amusing people with the pretended mysteries of their signs and secrets: But that persons who shall refuse or shift to give plain and particular answers to the foregoing questions, shall be reputed under scandal; incapable of admission to sealing ordinances, till they answer and give satisfaction as before appointed.

And the Synod refer to the several Sessions, to proceed unto higher censure as they shall see cause,—in the case of persons whom they may find involved in the said oath with special aggravation; as taking, or relapsing into the same, in opposition to warnings against doing so.

And the Synod appoint, that each of the Sessions under their inspection—shall have an extract of this act; for executing the same accordingly.
Period III. Of the Act concerning Arminian Errors. 131

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Progression V. Concerning Arminian Errors, upon the head of Universal Redemption.

The matters now to be represented, may be distinguished into Three Parts: Respecting the Act of Synod about these Errors; their proceedings with Mr Thomas Mair, as opposing himself to that Act; and the Illustration of the grounds of these proceedings.

Part I. Of the Synod’s Act, concerning Arminian Errors upon the head of Universal Redemption.

A Book was published in the year 1749, entitled [A Treatise on Justifying Faith]; and ascribed to Mr James Fraser of Brae, sometime Minister of the gospel at Culross: Though none are known of, who can ascertain Mr Fraser’s concern in that book.—The publisher indeed (a pewterer in Edinburgh) declares in his preface to it; that it was published without any alterations, which may be seen by the copy from which it is printed, it being prepared for the press by the author’s own hand. Yet this publisher could not be ignorant, (as he was dealt with in vain by one of the writers of that copy, to delay the publication till Mr Fraser’s manuscript should be found, or till the copy should be got revised),—that there was not one word of the alleged author’s hand-writing in the copy which he used: But that it had been transcribed, partly by a boy and girl when at school*, partly by he (or they) knew not whom,—from he (or they) knew not what other copy; a good many years after Mr Fraser’s death: And the world has therefore no reason to take his word for it, that he published even from this copy without any alterations; especially considering his high-flown zeal for the singular doctrines which it contains.

In that book, and chiefly in a long Appendix to the fifth chapter of it,—the Arminian point of universal Redemption is largely set forth; but in somewhat of a new form: As the author had found himself obliged, in answering objections

*viz. By Mr Thomas Mair, and one of his sisters; as he acknowledged to the writer of this account.
objections against that doctrine,—to make it up by some very horrible positions. And the substance of the whole is here gathered together, in one general view, at the foot of the page*.

* “Christ became the Representative of mankind,” p. 70, 71. “He became surety for all; God so willing it, and the Mediator consenting to it,” p. 221.

“Though

“Christ became the Representative of mankind,” p. 70, 71. “He became surety for all; God so willing it, and the Mediator consenting to it,” p. 221.

“There is a formal, legal, ordinate sufficiency in Christ’s blood whereby it is fitted every way to become a proper satisfaction for the sins of all mankind;—and to this ordinate sufficiency it is requisite, that the ransom be not only of sufficient value to answer the debts or crimes of the delinquents or debtors; but that the ransom be paid *ejus nomine,* (in his name), “or for him who is to be thereby redeemed or set at liberty:—I think it may be demonstrated, that Christ died thus sufficiently for all that are commanded to believe on a crucified Saviour,” p. 164. “Every one who is truly and really called to believe on Jesus Christ crucified, is truly redeemed by Christ,” p. 137. “Christ indeed, by his death, purchased remission of sins absolutely for all,” p. 176. “Taking Christ’s death adequately, he died for mankind; for Adam, Eve, and their posterity:—Christ did satisfy for human nature, and therefore satisfied for all and every individual of that species,” p. 173, 269. “If sin had reigned over all, and grace had been purchased only to few, then had not grace superabounded every way as sin abounded,” p. 264. “How doth grace superabound to righteousness, if justification and life be purchased only to a few elected persons?” p. 204, 205. “Christ is crucified for all men,” p. 214. “Christ—did satisfy divine justice for the sins of all mankind,” p. 222. “Christ bought the whole of mankind, overhead, in wholesale,” p. 257. “It was necessary Christ should die for Heathens,—as Christ died for mankind in general,” p. 259. “Whatever he laid out, in the whole tract of his humiliation, it was for both elect and reprobate,” p. 256. “Though some of the reprobates were damned actually when Christ died, he died for them in the fulness of time; by reason of the compact betwixt the Father and the Son,” p. 261. Christ, by one ransom, diversely intended, did satisfy for the sins of all mankind,” p. 263. “The objects of his death were stated differently, in the Covenant of redemption,” p. 267. “There is a common redemption, yet sufficient in law to be pleaded from; and, in case of pleading, to justify: and there is a special efficacious redemption, which brings salvation,” p. 266. “Though all be not redeemed by that special redemption, yet it follows not but that all may be truly redeemed by a common redemption,” p. 219. “Reprobates— are the object of a common, not of a special redemption; for whom he died, not for whose sake he died,” p. 187. “The death of Christ, as terminated to the elect, did proceed from love, and special love; the same death, as terminated to the reprobate, did flow from common love,” p. 239. “From either of the two, re-

demption
Though the minds of some people, in different corners, were gradually infected by the errors of that book,—as industriously handed about and recommended; yet no public hurt was like to follow therefrom, among those under the inspection of the Associate Synod: Till the peculiar doctrine of it was set off by another publication, in the year 1753.

What “demption did proceed,” p. 237. “The declaration of special love, is not the ground of believing,” p. 73.

“Christ might die, and did die, for some he never prayed for;” p. 242. “Before Christ had assumed human nature, he could not be said to pray:—It is not needful that Christ pray for all he died for; nor is Christ’s Priesthood and intercession connected inseparably together:—I deny that actual formal intercession, is essential to the office of the Mediator; for Christ died for the patriarchs and prophets,—and yet he prayed not for them,” p. 243. “The blood of Christ, which crieth for better things” (than that of Abel), “doth never really, but where it is applied in the conscience therewith sprinkled by faith,” p. 244.

“Without faith, there is not a physical connection,—no infallible connection,—no certain connection betwixt Christ’s death and salvation; yet there is a legal connection,—a legal arguing from the one to the other:—As Christ’s death is stated in the eye of faith, and to faith, there is always a connection,” p. 146, 202, 203. “Hence, the death of Christ being a ground in law to plead salvation upon, or to believe on; and faith being the very condition of salvation: The promise of salvation which before was conditional, closed with by faith, or as faith the condition looks to it, is absolute,” p. 146. “Indeed there is a connection inseparable and reciprocal, betwixt Christ’s common sufficient redemption and his intercession, giving of life, and justifying,” p. 220. “[The declaration of special love, is not the ground of believing,” p. 73.]

“All the good and comfort which men enjoy, whether special or common, flow from Christ’s blood:—They being spared from a present dropping into hell, their health, the several comforts of this life which all and every one doth enjoy, proceed from Christ as Mediator:—Therefore Christ behoved to die for them, to purchase these things; seeing they have them from him as Mediator,” p. 213. “The reprobates enjoying of these favours, doth result—from—Christ’s death as the meritorious cause,” p. 214. “The Magistrate’s power doth flow from Christ as Mediator;—he, as Mediator, is the fountain thereof,” p. 213.

“Christ’s dying for us, is made the ground and formal reason, why such as hear the gospel should believe,” p. 207. “Ere faith can lay hold on Christ’s blood, to be justified and saved thereby, the sinner must of necessity see this sacrifice offered up for him particularly.” p. 129.
What was called the *Reformed Presbytery* (which Mr Nairn, under scandal among them, had now deserted), came to be engaged in warm debates upon the *Arminian* doctrine of the aforesaid book; which issued in a rupture among them: Owing to some unruly and desperate efforts which were made, on behalf of that doctrine; by

Mr

p. 129. “Christ’s dying for us (is) to be necessarily believed antecedently, either in order of time or nature, to our closing with Christ by faith,” p. 150. “Though faith be a supernatural work, yet it is a rational work, and saints act most rationally when they believe:—There must be some rational ground in the object of our faith, to lean on; but unless Christ died for all, how can this sure ground be rationally evinced?” p. 263. “When therefore we come to believe, or know that we believe, then we come to know that Christ hath died for us in that special way proper only to the elect; and knowing that Christ so died for us, we may assuredly conclude, that we shall be saved.” p. 241.

“However—all for whom Christ any manner of way did really die, be not saved, but that some perish,—yet is not the Lord Christ’s labour in vain; his judgment is with the Lord, and his reward with his God; even—the manifestation of his power and wrath, as he is Mediator, on the vessels of wrath,” p. 225, 226. The Lord Jesus reaping the manifestation of his—gospel-wrath and vengeance on reprobates—he indeed reaps the travel of his soul, and the fruit of his labours, as they did extend to—reprobates,” p. 223. “The damnation of reprobates,—as it manifests—gospel-vengeance, is some way the travel and fruit of Christ’s death,” p. 224. “That—this gospel wrath might be manifested on some,—necessary it was that therefore Christ should die for them,” p. 255. “Not only is universal redemption consistent with the decree of reprobation, but necessarily subservient thereunto:—To the execution of which decree of reprobation, Christ’s death for all,—his death for reprobates, was—a necessary mean,—necessarily subservient,” p. 254, 255. “However God might shew the wrath of God as Creator upon reprobates, though Christ had never died for them,—yet could he not shew that severe punishment, that gospel-wrath and vengeance, which he was willing to shew,” p. 224. “The death of Christ,—materially considered, was capable to proceed not only from common love or special love; but, materially considered, was capable to proceed either from love or hatred,” p. 237. “Christ dying for all, may argue, that Christ hath a great measure of common love to them; which common love is consistent with hatred to them, as it is opposite to special love,” p. 239. “(The declaration of special love, is not the ground of believing,” p. 73.) “God—in delivering his Son to death, it was out of love to save some, and out of hatred to others to condemn them;—Christ’s death the common mean, both of love and hatred,” p. 240. “It is not, nor never was Christ’s intention and end, to save reprobates; and therefore is Christ no loser by them, for he reaps all he designed

“by
Mr James Hall one of their Ministers, in some particular connexion with the publisher of the book. When the said doctrine was brought to a question among them,—five members (two Ministers and three Elders) voted against it; as another of their Ministers, detained by indisposition, had sent up his judgment on the same side: But Mr Hall, with two Elders, voted for the condemned doctrine; and these three members, with the Moderator who took their part,—did thereupon assume the character of the Reformed Presbytery, in exclusion of the majority of unquarreled voters on the other side.

But this new Presbytery, wholly constituted on the ground of universal redemption, (and whose absurd constitution was good enough for their cause),—was soon afterwards dissolved; through Mr Hall’s colleague taking a course by himself: And thus, after one appearance like a baleful meteor, it for that time evanished. The appearance meant was in a pamphlet, published as a judicial deed, under this title, viz. The true state of the difference between

“by dying for them: And therefore must die for them,” (“who were actually damned before Christ came in the flesh,” p. 261.), “When out of capacity to be saved by his death, which he never intended; is in capacity to manifest the Mediator’s wrath and power, which they are,” p. 262.

“Here is no ground at all to charge the most righteous God with injustice, on the account of double satisfaction,” (“one made by Christ on the cross, another by reprobates in hell,” p. 227.) “For—the satisfaction made and ransom paid,—was not to liberate the man absolutely, but conditionally:—Double satisfaction is not exacted of one and the same person;—the Lord takes not double payment of the sinner himself, but it is from Christ and the sinner:——This double satisfaction is not made to one and the same person;,—for it is the person of the Father to whom Christ made satisfaction, and it is the person of the Son to whom satisfaction in hell is made by reprobates:—God’s will is the rule of all equity;—if therefore he had been pleased to exact twenty satisfactions, he could not be unjust; for in that he willed it, it was therefore just;—and he that, without the least stain of iniquity, exacted of Christ his life for sin, a price that did far exceed the demerit of the elect,—why may he not exact over and above what Christ suffered for reprobates, even another kind of satisfaction from them in hell?——If he took an overplus of satisfaction from Christ, why may he not take it from reprobates?” p. 228, 229, 230, 231.!!!

Such is the substance of that new scheme; largely amplified and inculcated, after a very shocking manner, in the book referred to.
the Reformed Presbytery, and some brethren who lately deserted them; together with a vindication of the Presbytery’s principles, about the extent of Christ’s death.

The historical part of this pamphlet afforded strong presumptions, that truth could not follow in the doctrinal part: The history being chiefly made up of self-evident and atrocious calumnies, abundantly poured out upon old Mr McMillan. And the doctrine which follows, taught with a high degree of sophistical ignorance and presumption, is a general adopting and embellishing of the new scheme contained in the aforesaid book,—without any exception; yet in utter silence about the horrible positions by which the author made it up: But all improved in a subservience to the Antigovernment scheme; to which that book gives a general countenance,—by teaching (p. 213), that “the Magistrate’s power doth flow from Christ as Mediator.”

This pamphlet, the doctrinal part of which did run in a very plausible and deceitful strain,—being of a more easy purchase, and so of a more ready circulation; did threaten much worse effects than the aforesaid book, among those under the inspection of the Associate Synod: As soon took place upon some few, with the appearance of imminent hazard as to many. And this was greatly contributed unto, by accounts which had been privately circulated in some places for a good time back; concerning Mr Thomas Mair, as a favourer of that book: But especially, by some recommendations which he had made of the above-mentioned pamphlet; abstracting from the antigovernment principles which it contains.—Upon the whole, there was a most threatening appearance of confusions ready to break out in Seceding congregations; from a corrupting or jumbling of peoples judgments, by this new delusion: But the timeous check which the Synod gave to it, was very remarkably blessed,—for recovering and confirming their people, with a preventing of more general distractions among them.

The Associate Presbytery of Edinburgh (within whose bounds that new scheme made its principal appearance) found themselves obliged, at their meeting in December 1753,
1753, to take the affair under consideration: And they spent some time, at four ensuing meetings,—in considering upon “what steps the Lord might be calling them to take; in opposition to that late revival of Arminianism in the article of Universal Redemption, which was notoriously taking place.” The issue hereof was,—that they unanimously proposed an overture upon this subject to the meeting of the Associate Synod, at Edinburgh in April 1754.

In this overture, they represented it as “a matter of public notoriety; that the Arminian scheme of Universal Atonement and Redemption as to purchase, was lately revived and industriously promoted, in somewhat of a new and more ensnaring form,—among some of the Antigovernment party; though they pretend a zealous adhering to our Reformation-standards, and testifying against the prevailing evils of the present generation in these lands: And that this new flood of error, whereby the system of gospel-doctrine is very widely and perniciously attacked,—did more and more threaten to overthrow the faith of some.” It was therefore humbly moved to the Reverend Synod, “That they might consider upon a proper course to be taken,—for guarding the people under their inspection, and particularly their candidates for the holy ministry, against the imminent danger from the said revival of Arminianism: And more especially, That the Reverend Synod might turn the point of gospel-truth—against the chief branches of this new mode of Arminianism; by asserting particularly the opposite doctrines of the LORD’S word, which are contained in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms,—being also maintained in the Judicial Act and Testimony, in the Act concerning the doctrine of grace, and in the Acknowledgment of Sins with the Bond—wherein our Solemn Covenants have been renewed among us.”

This overture likewise contained a proposal of some particular assertions of gospel-truth, in seven articles; bearing a direct opposition to the chief branches of that new scheme: Whereupon it was humbly moved unto the Reverend Synod, “That they might assert these foregoing or like articles; with a general condemnation and rejection.”
tion of all contrary errors, or of all tenets and opinions which are opposite unto or inconsistent with the said articles of gospel-truth;—and with a general warning to all the people under their inspection, to beware of entertaining any contrary doctrines; particularly as they might find the same vented in any books or pamphlets which they get into their hands.”

The Synod took this overture into consideration, at their foresaid meeting,—which continued two weeks. After some general reasoning upon the overture, they agreed in waving any particular examination of what was set forth in the preamble thereof; concerning a late revival of Arminianism in the article of Universal Redemption, with the imminent danger therefrom: But they likewise agreed in apprehending such a danger of that kind, as made it requisite and necessary for them—to proceed upon the articles proposed in the said overture. “Having accordingly considered these articles at several sederunts, with some amendments of them,—in a course of reasoning, with prayer; they were severally agreed unto and approved of: Wherefore the Synod DID, and hereby DO ACKNOWLEDGE, ASSERT, and DECLARE,” accordingly. “Moreover, the Synod DID, and hereby DO CONDEMN and REJECT,—as also give WARNING;” in terms of the overture: And they appointed that this their ACT should be published.

The Act was therefore published, soon afterwards; under this title: [ACT of the Associate Synod at Edinburgh, April 18th 1754; containing an assertion of some Gospel-truths, in opposition to Arminian errors upon the head of Universal Redemption]. The several ARTICLES of this Act are now to be exhibited; the passages of the holy Scriptures, and of our subordinate standards, upon which they were severally founded,—being marked at the foot of the page: And they are as follows, viz.

I. That, in the covenant of grace, our Lord Jesus Christ became the federal Head and Representative of those only among

among mankind-sinners, whom God hath out of his mere good pleasure from all eternity elected unto everlasting life; and for them only, he was made an undertaking Surety.

II. That our Lord Jesus Christ hath redeemed none others by his death, but the elect only: Because for them only he was made under the law, made sin, and made a curse; being substituted only in their law-room and stead,—and having only their iniquities laid upon him, or imputed unto him;—so that he did bear only their sins; for them only he laid down his life, and was crucified: For their sins only he made satisfaction to divine Justice; for them only he fulfilled all righteousness; in their stead only was his obedience and satisfaction accepted; and for them only he purchased redemption, with all other benefits of the covenant of grace.

III. That there is but one special redemption, by the death of Christ, for all the objects thereof; as he died in one and the same respect, for all those for whom he in any respect died: Or, he died out of the greatest special love, for all in whose room he laid down his life; with an intention of having them all effectually redeemed and saved, unto the glory of free grace.

IV. That the Intercession of Christ is infallibly of the same extent, in respect of its objects, with the atonement and satisfaction made in his death: So that he actually and effectually makes intercession for all those for whom he laid down his life, or for whom he hath purchased redemption; that it may be fully applied to them in due season.

V. That the death of Christ, as it is stated in the Covenant of Grace,—hath a necessary, inseparable, certain and infallible


infallible connection with, and efficacy for the actual and complete salvation of all those for whom he died: So that redemption is certainly applied and effectually communicated to all those for whom Christ purchased the same; all in whose stead he died being, in due season, effectually called,—justified, adopted, sanctified and glorified.

VI. That CHRIST and the benefits of his purchase cannot be divided; neither can these benefits be divided, one from another:—Wherefore we are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, or of the benefits procured by his death,—only through the effectual application thereof to us by his HOLY SPIRIT, working faith in us; and thereby uniting us to CHRIST, in our effectual calling: And whoever do actively receive and enjoy any benefits of his purchase, as they do it only in the way of enjoying himself; so they will all be brought forward, in due time, to the full enjoying of himself and all his benefits for ever: And whatever things are actively received or used any otherwise than by faith, in a state of union with Christ,—are not to be reckoned among the benefits purchased by his death.

VII. That whereas there is a general, free and unlimited offer of Christ, and salvation through him, by the gospel, unto sinners of mankind as such,—(upon the foundation of the intrinsic sufficiency of the death of Christ, his relation of a kinsman-redeemer to mankind sinners as such, and the promise of eternal life through him to mankind sinners as such in the gospel); with an interposal of divine authority in the gospel call, immediately requiring all the hearers thereof to receive and rest upon Christ alone for salvation, as he is freely offered to them in the gospel;—and whereas all the hearers of the gospel are

thus

VI. Job xxiv. 18. Psal. xxxvii. 16. Prov. iii. 33. viii. 19, 21, 35. John i. 12. Rom. viii. 17, 32. 1 Cor. i. 9. iii. 21, 22, 23. 2 Cor. i. 20. Eph. i. 13, 14. ii. 8. Tit. iii. 5, 6, 7. Conf. iii. 6. viii. 1, 5. Larg. Cat. 57, 58. Short. Cat. 29, 30.

thus privileged with an equal, full and immediate warrant to make a particular application of Christ, with all his redemption and salvation, severally unto themselves, by a true and lively faith: So the gospel offer and call, containing the warrant of faith, cannot require or infer any universal atonement and redemption as to purchase; but are altogether consistent with and conform'd unto the scripture-doctrine of particular redemption, which is expressed in the six preceding articles:—Because our LORD JESUS CHRIST, in the glorious constitution of his person as God-man, Immanuel, God with us,—doth stand in an equal or undistinguished relation of a kinsman-redeemer, to mankind sinners as such: And because his mediatory offices, in the true and glorious nature thereof, do stand in an equal or undistinguished relation and suitableness—to the case and need of mankind-sinners as such: And because the atonement and righteousness of Christ, are in themselves of a justice-satisfying and law-magnifying nature; containing the utmost of what law and justice can require, for repairing the whole breach of the covenant of works and fulfilling the same,—in order to the justification of mankind-sinners as such, who are warranted to betake themselves thereto by faith: And because in the case of a sinner’s justification, law and justice have no respect to God’s sovereign counsel about what persons belong to the election of grace,—for whom only Christ was employed to make satisfaction and fulfil all righteousness, and for whom alone he intentionally did so; or, which is materially the same thing, they have no respect to the particular objective destination or intention of Christ’s satisfaction and righteousness, in the transaction of the new covenant, as any way belonging to the pleadableness thereof at the bar of Law and Justice;—but they (viz. Law and Justice) have a respect only unto the justice-satisfying and law-magnifying nature of this atonement and righteousness; in behalf of every sinner who is found betaking himself thereunto by faith upon the divine warrant,—as the same is unto all and upon all them that believe, without any difference: And because, therefore, the formal ground and reason of faith—doth nowise lie in any particular objective destination of Christ’s satisfaction and righteousness, or in any particular

objective
objective intention wherewith he made and fulfilled the same;—but it wholly lies in the glorious person and offices of Christ, with his satisfaction and righteousness, as freely and equally set forth by the gospel unto all the hearers thereof; with the Lord’s gracious call and command, for each of them to come over by faith unto this glorious foundation,—and with absolute promises of justification and eternal life through Christ to mankind-sinners as such in the gospel, the possession of which blessings is to be certainly obtained in this way of believing.

Part II. Of the Synod’s proceedings with Mr Thomas Mair, as opposing himself to the foregoing Act.

I. Of forty-eight Ministers who then belonged to the Associate Synod, only Mr Thomas Mair stood in opposition to the Act which has now been explained; three other Ministers, who at first demurred about some terms, having at length declared full satisfaction with it.

When the Synod was proceeding upon the several articles of that act, he was silent as to the first and third of them; but expressed some demurring about the second, fourth and fifth articles: And he voted against the sixth; yet he voted for the seventh, abstracting from its reduplications upon the preceding articles;—as he likewise expressed a dissatisfaction with the general conclusion of the act. Such was all the measure of his opposition, upon that occasion.

II. At the next meeting of Synod, in August 1754,—Mr Mair gave in a paper of dissent from the said act, containing his reasons for doing so; which was read.

In this whole paper, no particular quarrel was stated with that act,—in any of its articles. But the dissent was especially founded upon its being “evident and declared, that the Synod had framed their act in opposition to Mr Fraser’s treatise on the Grounds of Faith; and particularly what he delivers therein concerning the extent of the death of Christ, and his purchase of common benefits:” Unto the quarreled scheme of which treatise, his paper did bear a very ample testimony; fully adopting the same in a general manner, without any exception.

But
But the Synod could not see it their proper business, to comply with the design of Mr Mair’s paper; which was evidently to turn them away from any question about truth and error in the cause before them, till once they should go through the mist of a controversy about the character and meaning of a private author. If he would maintain any different principles from them, in the weighty matter of their aforesaid act,—they wanted to have some particular account of these his principles from himself; instead of being sent away to seek them out of Mr Fraser’s book: While they did not chuse to take any advantage from his most surprising approbation of it in a general manner, for fixing any of its quarreled principles upon him; farther than he should particularly adopt the same.—Wherefore, they did not then receive his paper; but delayed the question about receiving it, till their next meeting.

III. When the Synod was again met in March 1755, and on the first week of their meeting, after long conference with Mr Mair upon the subject,—they rejected, without a contradictory voice, that paper of dissent which he had offered at their last meeting; for the reasons which have been mentioned: But, at his desire, they left the door open for his proposing what further he might see proper on the present affair,—before the conclusion of that meeting.

On the ensuing week, Mr Mair gave in a new and long paper of dissent,—with reasons. But also in this paper, which was immediately read,—there was no particular or direct stating of any objections, against all or any articles of the Synod’s act. Wherefore they spent much time, in earnest dealings with him,—to retract his paper; thus engaging to abstain from teaching any opinions contrary to the articles of gospel-truth asserted in their act;—or to signify his opposition thereto in plain and positive terms, explaining himself upon the subject by distinct assertions: But all in vain.

A further attempt was then made, for obtaining plainness from Mr Mair upon this subject.—Seven different positions were stated to him, as what seemed (from his paper and speeches) to be his mind in opposition to the aforesaid articles; and as containing the lowest measure
of any proper contradiction to these articles: Upon which the Synod agreed that he should be required at their meeting next day, either to withdraw his paper of dissent; or to explain himself in clear and positive terms upon these positions, by either acknowledging or refusing them,—with a plain and positive declaration of what else he did hold, in place of each particular which he should refuse;—and he was allowed to have these positions, in the mean time, under his consideration.

Being accordingly required to drop his opposition, by withdrawing his paper of dissent; he refused to do so: And, in place thereof, he gave in a paper of answers upon the positions which had been stated to him. But the Synod observed, with surprise,—that his paper, instead of making any clearer discovery of his sentiments, as to wherein he differed from them, did further involve and overcloud the same; while therein he neither absolutely refused nor acknowledged any of these positions. There was therefore long reasoning and earnest dealing with him, to take back his paper of dissent,—and also the paper now given in by him; otherwise, to open himself more plainly on the affair, that the Synod might understand his real sentiments. But all these endeavours proving unsuccessful, a committee was appointed to prepare an overture upon the whole affair,—to be laid before the Synod at their next sederunt.

The overture brought in by the committee (according to which the Synod proceeded) did contain the following extract from Mr Mair's paper of dissent, viz. “That besides the special objective destination and intention of our Lord's death, respecting the elect,—there was some kind of general or universal objective destination and intention thereof, in the transaction of the New Covenant: That in some sense Christ was made sin for all the hearers of the gospel, and made satisfaction for the sins of all those to whom he is exhibited by the gospel; yea, that in some sense Christ died for all mankind, or shed his blood for them,—making a full payment of their debt, and a satisfaction to justice for their guilt, by some kind or manner of intention in his making satisfaction: And that this universal objective destination

“of
“of the death of Christ, necessarily belongs to the ground upon which sinners may be invited to Christ,—and necessarily belongs to the pleadableness of Christ’s satisfaction and righteousness, at the bar of law and justice; so that the sinner’s plea, to be propounded and sustained at the bar of law and justice, is a claim of right to Christ’s blood—arising from the foresaid universal objective destination; and that an excluding all such concern in or claim to the death of Christ, as for the man in particular, until he believe,—leaves no access for an applying faith: And that the purchase of Christ admits of a further and larger consideration, than is treated of in our standards.”

When this extract was read twice over before him, Mr Mair did not offer to alledge,—that any injury was done to him or his paper, by charging these tenets upon it. And “the Synod did strictly prohibit him, from teaching or venting any tenets or opinions contrary to the articles of truth asserted in the act of Synod dissent from; and particularly from venting or teaching the above and such other tenets or opinions, which were evidently subversive of our received and sworn-to standards of doctrine: As also they appointed him to evidence his falling from the teaching or venting of those tenets and opinions, by withdrawing his paper of dissent against the next meeting of Synod; with certification that, if he should persist in refusing to do so, the Synod would find themselves obliged to proceed to censure against him.”—And they appointed a committee for conversing with him, once or oftner as they should find occasion, in order to the removing of difference in this matter,—betwixt and the next meeting of Synod.

IV. At this meeting, in August 1755,—the committee reported that they had held a long conference with Mr Mair; upon the principles or tenets advanced by him in his paper of dissent, and specified and condemned in the Synod’s act relative thereto: But without effect.

A long time was therefore spent in reasoning with him, for obtaining a compliance with the appointment of that act: But, when the question was then put, he dictated the following answer to the clerk, víz. “That he had no free-

“dom
“dom to fall from teaching those doctrines, upon the matter, which are specified and condemned in the Synod’s act, according to his view of them; and that therefore he could not withdraw his dissent.”

After long conference upon this subject at the next sederunt, the Synod agreed in making the following proposal to him, viz. “That if he was now in a readiness to desire further time for considering upon the present affair,—and an opportunity of further converse with a committee of Synod upon the subject, betwixt and their next meeting; and to submit in the meantime to the prohibition of the Synod’s act concerning him,—as to an abstaining from teaching the opinions therein referred to, and keeping them to himself if he cannot fall from them: That then the Synod should presently rest in appointing a committee for the said converse, and renewing the said prohibition.” —But he answered, “That he had no freedom to fall in with that proposal.” The Synod then deliberating further upon this affair;—and considering that Mr Mair, in his paper of dissent, “has advanced several positions, condescended upon in the late act of Synod concerning him, which are dangerous errors,—plainly subverting our received principles of gospel-truth, laid down from the holy Scriptures in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms; and that he refuses to withdraw his said paper of dissent,—or so much as to abstain from teaching those positions, till another meeting of Synod:” They did therefore, without a contradictory voice, actually suspend him from the exercise of the holy ministry; with certification that they would consider, at their next meeting, upon proceeding against him by some higher censure,—if he should not then offer satisfaction. But, upon the intimating of this sentence to him, he protested against it.

V. Mr Mair did not attend the next meeting of Synod, in April 1756: And the clerk was then appointed to give him notice, of their resolution to proceed upon his case at their ensuing meeting.

At this meeting in August the same year, he was present: and, upon being interrogated, he owned that he had not obeyed the sentence of suspension; as he like-
wise refused to withdraw his paper of dissent.—Long reasoning with him did then take place; during which he asserted in the strongest terms, 1. “That our Lord Jesus Christ died as a surety-priest, in some sense, for reprobates; for Judas, as well as for Peter. 2. That by his death he bought all mankind, the elect as his bride; and the rest of the world as his tools, for the glory of God and the good of the elect.”

But, though “the Synod expressed their dissatisfaction with Mr Mair’s present appearance, and the above positions advanced by him, as additional grounds of censure;—yet in order to shew their lenity, and their sincere desire to reclaim him from the erroneous and pernicious tenets which he has adopted and openly maintained in face of the Synod;” they went no further than in appointing a committee to converse and deal with him, betwixt and their next meeting: Renewing the certification, as to proceeding against him at that time without further delay, if he should not then offer satisfaction.

Mr Mair immediately signified a willingness to meet with the committee: “But in regard the Synod had condemned the above two positions now advanced by him, he protested against the condemnation thereof; for reasons to be given in due time.”

VI. He was again present, at the meeting of Synod in April 1757: At which time there were long, but unsuccessful reasonings with him, for obtaining the satisfaction formerly required. And when a proposal was made by some brethren, to delay further procedure in this affair till next meeting; “if Mr Mair would show an inclination to take his controverted tenets into consideration till that time, for a further examination thereof,—with a view to retract the same, upon being brought to a conviction of the error contained in them:” He declined to do so; declaring, “That he had no dubiety about his principles.”

After further deliberation, and without a contradictory voice,—the Synod laid him under the censure of Deposition and lesser Excommunication; upon the grounds which have been represented: With certification of their considering afterwards upon proceeding against him, as they should
see cause, with the highest censure of the Church; if he should not come to offer the desired satisfaction. But, upon the pronouncing of this sentence, he protested against their act of April 18th 1754 about doctrine,—with the whole of their procedure in his case; and particularly the present sentence*.

VII. The Synod was evidently forced to go forward, with great reluctance, in their proceedings against Mr Mair. Much time was spent upon tedious reasonings with him, at many sederunts, in all their meetings but one,—through the course of three years; with a frequent employing of brethren, all along, in turns of prayer—for divine light and pity.

And though they were very desirous of his renouncing those new tenets which he had espoused,—yet they never absolutely required this, as the only satisfaction in which they could acquiesce: While he all along seemed unripe for being thus dealt with, by his labouring under a great confusion of thoughts upon the subject. But what they particularly and earnestly insisted for was, that he would keep such points to himself;—or that he should drop his stated opposition to their act, and should fall from the venting of such erroneous notions among the people; of which they required no other evidence, but a withdrawing his paper of dissent: So that, in this way, they were willing to exercise forbearance with him. And when all such endeavours proved fruitless, they could not stop short of the issue which has been explained,—without suffering the banner of gospel-truth to fall among them.

Part III. The Illustration of the Grounds upon which the Synod proceeded against Mr Thomas Mair.

When the Synod had laid Mr Mair under the censure of suspension, in August 1755,—they directed their proceedings concerning him to be published with all convenient

*Upon going home from this meeting of Synod, Mr Mair publicly condemned and lamented over the proceedings against the separating Brethren,—in which he had acted a very distinguished part: And, for above ten years that he survived, he persisted in his opposition to the Synod.
Period III. Of the extent of Christ’s Death.

convenient expedition; and appointed a committee of their number to oversee the publication thereof,—adding some Illustration and defence of the Synod’s procedure in this cause, as they should find occasion: All which was done accordingly.

The grounds of that procedure (beside Mr Mair’s obstinacy in maintaining them), were,—the erroneous positions extracted from his paper of dissent; which have been already represented, [p. 144, 145.]. And an abstract of the committee’s Illustration of these grounds may be now exhibited: Concerning the objective extent of the death of CHRIST, the gospel-call, the warrant of faith, and the doctrine of our standards about the purchase of Christ; with some general observations upon the whole.

Section I. Concerning the objective extent of the death of CHRIST.

Mr Mair’s doctrine upon this head, is,—“That besides the special objective destination and intention of our Lord’s death, respecting the elect; there was some kind of general or universal objective destination and intention thereof, in the transaction of the new Covenant: That in some sense Christ was made sin for all the hearers of the gospel, and made satisfaction for the sins of all those to whom he is exhibited by the gospel; yea, that in some sense Christ died for all mankind, or shed his blood for them; making a full payment of their debt, and a satisfaction to justice for their guilt, by some kind or manner of intention in his making satisfaction.”

The necessary import of all this is, That our Lord died equally for all and every one of mankind,—as the Objects of his death, or as to the manner of his dying for them, (in their name and stead, in the capacity of their Surety); however unequally, as to the ends for which he did so: That he died for the persons of all, though for the sake of the elect only. But this doctrine, as it is not only without any foundation in the holy Scriptures,—but also plainly subverts the principles of gospel-truth which are laid down therefrom in

our
our subordinate standards*; so it is, in itself of a very sinful and pernicious import: It even means nothing less, in its real nature and tendency, than to unhinge and make void the whole mystery of the gospel. As,

I. This universal scheme is for breaking asunder, and dissolving the whole chain of salvation through the blood of Christ.—Because, if he laid down his life for many who shall never live through him, there can be no necessary and certain connection between his death and the salvation of those for whom he died. And if his dying for any be a thing actually separable from their salvation; then none of those for whom he died can infallibly have salvation,—or they must have it some other way than from the merit of his death.

II. This universal scheme is for blotting out the peculiar character of our Lord’s death; that of its being a sufficient or effectual ransom.—For if this ransom was paid for many who will never be ransomed; or if he was made a curse for many who will never have to say—Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law; and if his dying for any, can thus fail of procuring their actual redemption: Then his death must lose the nature of a sufficient or effectual ransom; and it must be something else that infallibly procures or secures the redemption of any.

III. This universal scheme is for abolishing the peculiar capacity in which our Lord died; that of his being a complete Surety.—For “the Surety and the Debtor are one and the same person in law; one and the same legal party: The debt is one; not two debts, not two ransoms; not two lives to lose, but one: It is one and the same satisfaction; there cannot, in law-justice, come another reckoning, after the Surety has paid: There is one and the same acceptation on the creditor’s part; if he accept of satisfaction in the payment made by the Surety, he cannot but legally accept of the debtor,—and cannot pursue him in law: It is one and the same legal effect; Christ justified in the Spirit,—and

*The Committee’s illustration contains a distinct proof of this charge; from the passages of Scripture, and of our Confession and Catechisms, which are quoted upon the first six articles of the Synod’s Act about Doctrine: With a detection of the vanity of those arguments, by which Mr Mair endeavoured to support his Universal Scheme.
“we in him, as the meritorious cause, are legally justified*.” Wherefore, if Christ died as a Surety for many who shall never be released, but eternally prosecuted for their debt to Law and Justice; and if his thus dying for any can wholly fail of procuring their acquittance: Then his Suretyship must evanish, as to any completeness of its nature; and it must be upon some other footing, that the acquittance of any is infallibly secured.

IV. This universal scheme is for degrading and overthrowing the Priesthood of our Lord Jesus.—For the nature of his priesthood requires, that his atonement and intercession be of the same extent; respecting all the same objects; as the legal high-priest made a typical appearance within the vail, for all and each of those for whom he made a typical atonement without the vail. But if Christ has made an atonement for many, for whom he doth not now appear in the presence of God; then his priesthood, instead of excelling, would fall greatly below the type: And he were now to be considered, as greatly declining in that love from which he laid down his life,—by neglecting the most of those for whom he did so; yea as having become negligent and unfaithful, about what he has merited by his death for many. On the other hand, if he had died for all,—and were also making intercession for all, while yet the most of them perish; this would say, that his intercession were generally weak or vain,—or that his death had not a sufficiency of merit, for bearing out his intercession: But if his atonement and intercession can thus fail, as to any; then the infallible bringing of many sons to glory, must not be owing to his priesthood.

V. This universal scheme is for fastening the greatest reproach upon the infinite Justice of God: As if it had most rigorously prosecuted Christ for the sins of many, who yet must have all their sins lying for ever upon themselves; and as if it had both exacted and accepted of a full satisfaction from him, for many,—without ever being any way satisfied for them, but exacting upon them also forever.

VI. This universal scheme is for disparaging the greatest Love of God; as if it proved abortive and vain, even in its greatest

*Rutherford’s Treatise on the Covenant; Part II, p. 251.
Of the extent of Christ’s Death.

Period III.

greatest effect, toward the most part of its objects.——According to scripture, [Rom. v. 8. and viii. 32. 1 John iii. 16, and iv. 9, 10.], God’s sending his Son to die for any, is the greatest effect of his greatest love towards them; whereby all the other effects thereof are fully secured, unto their eternal salvation. But, according to that scheme, this greatest love, after proceeding so far,—does then give way to eternal wrath (or even paves the way for a greater height of eternal wrath), upon the generality of its objects.

VII. This universal scheme is for dethroning the sovereign Grace and Wisdom of God, in the mystery of redemption through Christ. For, according to this scheme, the wisdom of God has greatly failed; in contriving such an application of redemption, as comes far short of corresponding to the purchase thereof: Or in contriving a purchase much larger than the application, whereby the purchase must be so far useless and lost.——Moreover, the purchase of redemption for all mankind, by Christ’s dying for them all, was either conditional or absolute. If it was conditional, that the application was to depend on some condition to be performed by the creature; then the sovereign grace of God is subjected to man’s free will. But if the purchase was absolute, and yet the generality of those for whom it was made do perish; the reason of this must be, that divine grace proved very weak and insufficient for carrying out the purchase to a full application: Or the reason must be, that Christ died for all mankind,—with no view to the salvation, but only to procure the deeper damnation of the far greatest part of them; and thus, the most desirable covenant of grace—would be turned rather unto a most dreadful covenant of wrath and hatred.

Section II. Concerning the Gospel Call.

The doctrine of Mr Mair’s dissent, upon this head, is,—“That some universal objective destination of the death of Christ, as having in some sense died for all mankind necessarily belongs to the ground upon which

sinners
“sinners may be invited to Christ: And that an excluding all such concern in or claim to the death of Christ, as for the man in particular, until he believe,—leaves no access for an applying faith.”

But there is not the least hint, in our subordinate standards or in all the scriptures; as if sinners must be given to know, in their state of unbelief, that Christ hath died for all and each of them,—as the ground upon which they may come to him in a way of believing: While this, instead of being any ground for them to come upon, is a great falsehood*.——And here, the true ground of the Gospel-call may be explained; the truth on this head vindicated, and the bad import of Mr Mair’s doctrine concerning it laid open.

**Article I. The true Ground of the Gospel-call explained.**

For clearing up the truth upon this head, it is proper to take some particular view of what is laid down in the seventh article of the Synod’s Act; about the foundation or ground of the Gospel-offer and call. It is there declared to proceed “upon the foundation of the intrinsic sufficiency of the death of CHRIST; his relation of a Kinsman-redeemer to mankind-sinners as such; and the promise of eternal life to mankind-sinners as such, in the Gospel.” And,

I. As to the intrinsic sufficiency of our Lord’s death, it lies in this: That “the atonement and righteousness of Christ are in themselves of a justice-satisfying and law-magnifying nature; containing the utmost of what law and justice can require, for repairing the whole breach of the Covenant of works and fulfilling the same,—in order to the justification and salvation of mankind-sinners as such, who are warranted to betake themselves thereto by faith.”

Thus

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*The opposition of this doctrine to the Scriptures and our subordinate standards, is cleared in the Committee’s Illustration; from these passages which are quoted upon the seventh article of the Synod’s act about doctrine.
Thus, though our Lord came to redeem only a part of mankind,—he did not come to fulfil only a part of the law, or to bear only a part of its curse; and there can be no distinguishing of this matter into parts. Nothing less could have been sufficient, for the redemption of any one of them,—than a repairing the whole breach of the Covenant of works, and a fulfilling the same; nothing less than a fulfilling the whole commands of the law, and a bearing it’s whole curse,—all which he has done: And nothing more could be requisite, in the nature of the thing, for the redemption of all sinners who are under the broken Covenant. Though our Lord had come, to bring about an effectual redemption and salvation of all mankind,—law and justice would have required no other, no further atonement and righteousness, than what he has actually wrought out; being such as contains the utmost of what they can require for that end.

Were all mankind betaking themselves to this atonement and righteousness, at the bar of the law and justice; nothing further could be found requisite there, for the justification and salvation of them all: And while none are justified at that bar, as elect,—but as mankind-sinners, who are betaking themselves to this atonement and righteousness by faith; at the same time, all are warranted to do so wherever the Gospel comes.—Such then is the intrinsic sufficiency of our Lord’s death, the justice-satisfying and law-magnifying nature of his atonement and righteousness; a ground of sufficient validity and extent, for the most free and extensive offer and call of the Gospel to mankind-sinners.

II. Christ’s relation of a Kinsman-Redeemer to mankind-sinners as such, lies both in his Person and Offices. For,  
1st, “Our LORD JESUS CHRIST, in the glorious constitution of his person, as God-man, Immanuel, God with us,—doth stand in an equal or undistinguished relation of a Kinsman-Redeemer, to mankind-sinners as such.” The relation here spoken of, is not such as arises from any act of God’s counsel or purpose concerning sinners; nor is it such as arises from any act of Christ’s intention or design concerning them: But it is such as arises from the constitution of the person of Christ,—in his being
Period III. Of the Gospel-call.

being God-man, a Redeemer in the human nature; and this relation can no more belong to the elect, than to any other sinners in the same nature.

Christ indeed stands in a very special and distinguished relation of a Kinsman-redeemer, to the elect; from the act of the Father’s will in giving them to him, and the act of his own will in undertaking for them: But this relation is wholly abstracted from, in the offer made of Christ to them or others by the Gospel. Yet, as he is God manifest in the flesh, bearing the public capacity of a Redeemer,—made under the law in man’s nature; this makes his person to stand in the relation of a Kinsman-redeemer to mankind-sinners, to them all equally as such,—without any distinction between the elect and others: Because the elect are no otherwise sinners, and no otherwise men, than what all the rest of mankind are.

2dly, Our Lord Jesus bears this further relation of a Kinsman-redeemer, to mankind sinners as such; that “his mediatory offices, in the true and glorious nature thereof,—do stand in an equal and undistinguished relation and suitableness, to the case and need of mankind-sinners as such.”—There is indeed a very special, a distinguished relation and suitableness of his offices to the elect; from his becoming an undertaker for them in these offices: Which also is wholly abstracted from, in the offer made of Christ by the Gospel. But the relation and suitableness which arises from the glorious nature of these offices, must belong to mankind sinners, to them all equally as such,—without any distinction between the elect and others; because the case and need of the elect, is just of the same nature with that of others: As the office of a physician, in its nature, is the same way related to the condition of all diseased persons; especially such as are all in the same disease.

And from the common relation of a Kinsman-redeemer, which Christ thus bears to mankind,—he is every way fit for being employed and rested upon by them; in his person, offices, atonement and righteousness: Which is a ground of sufficient validity and extent, for the most extensive offer and call of the Gospel to mankind-sinners.
III. There are “absolute promises of justification and eternal life through Christ, to mankind-sinners as such, in the Gospel; the possession of which blessings is to be certainly obtained, in the way of believing.”

In the original transaction of the New Covenant, all the promises bear a special and particular direction to the elect,—all their names being, as it were, severally recorded therein; so that the promises, as there laid, are an expression of God’s gracious purpose concerning each of them particularly, and them only: But the matter is far otherwise, in the administration of that Covenant by the Gospel. For the Gospel, as it were, brings forth an extract from that glorious original,—in which extract, the promises bear only an indefinite direction; a blank being left, where the names of the elect are recorded in the original: So that these promises, as laid out to men in the Gospel, do abstract from all regard to any as elect,—to any, more than others; or they have a respect to them only as sinners, mankind-sinners.

And these absolute promises to mankind-sinners as such, in the Gospel, are not to be immediately considered as an expression of God’s purpose,—or as a declaring of what he will do, in the performance thereof; but they are to be immediately considered, as an expression of God’s free offer so to do and perform: Which offer is freely and equally made to every hearer of the Gospel, warranting them all to apprehend and apply the promises by faith; while the possession of all promised blessings, is to be certainly obtained in the way of believing,—the Lord never failing to sustain faith’s appropriation of the promises, so as to perform the same unto all believers. Neither are these promises to be considered as an expression or declaration of God’s purpose to any in particular, but as they come to be accepted and rested upon; or as persons are determined to fill up their names in the blank, by the hand of faith: Which all Gospel hearers are equally and immediately warranted to do, by God’s offer and call.

Such then is the direction or indorsement which the absolute promises of justification and eternal life, through Christ, bear to mankind-sinners indefinitely; in the Gospel: And such is the claim they have to these promises,
a claim every way sufficient to faith; having no dependence on God’s intention or design, as to whom the promises were originally made for. And seeing they make an exhibition of Christ to all Gospel-hearers,—in his person, offices, atonement and righteousness; or do bring him and his whole redemption to every sinner’s door, in a full and free offer: This is a glorious foundation, a sufficient ground,—for the general call of the Gospel.

Moreover, this call is not man’s, but God’s: There is "an interposal of divine authority in the Gospel-call; immediately requiring all the hearers thereof to receive and rest upon CHRIST alone for salvation, as he is freely offered to them in the Gospel.” And from this call of divine authority, upon the gloriously sufficient foundation which has been considered; “all the hearers of the Gospel are privileged with an equal, full and immediate warrant,—to make a particular application and appropriation of CHRIST, with all his redemption and salvation, severally unto themselves, by a true and lively faith.”

Article II. The truth on this Head vindicated.

The blood of Christ is brought sufficiently within the reach of an applying faith, by what has been already considered. And it may be further considered,—That, “in the case of a sinner’s justification, law and justice have no respect to GOD’S sovereign counsel about what persons belong to the election of grace,—for whom only CHRIST was employed to make satisfaction and fulfill all righteousness, and for whom alone he intentionally did so; or which is materially the same thing, they have no respect to the particular objective destination or intention of CHRIST’S satisfaction and righteousness, in the transaction of the New Covenant,—as any way belonging to the pleadableness thereof at the bar of law and justice: But they (viz. law and justice) have a respect only unto the justice-satisfying and law-magnifying nature of this atonement and righteousness; in behalf of every sinner who is found betaking himself thereunto by faith, up-

“on
“on the divine warrant,—as the same is **unto all and upon all them that believe**, without any **difference**.” As to which it may be observed, that,

I. Two things are here justly declared to be materially the same, viz. “God’s sovereign counsel, about what persons belong to the election of grace,”—and “the particular objective destination or intention of CHRIST’S satisfaction and righteousness, in the transaction of the New Covenant.” And these are evidently the same things, upon the matter: Because God did not make an election of any persons separately from Christ;—he did not by one act chuse some to everlasting life, and by another act give them to Christ for being brought to life; but all was by one act, they were *chosen in him*, Eph. i. 4. The act of God’s electing love did not proceed from Christ, as the meritorious cause thereof: But it *terminated* in Christ; stating them in him, as the glorious mean, or great ordinance of God,—for bringing about what they were elected unto. Therefore, God’s particular destination or appointment of Christ’s death for them—was just a terminating of their election in him; and Christ’s particular intention of his death for them, was just his compliance with the purpose of their election in him: And all this was in the same transaction of the New Covenant, that glorious council of peace; where they were chosen in him, to be brought unto eternal life through his satisfaction and righteousness. Thus, the particular objective destination and intention of Christ’s death for any—cannot be really separated or distinguished from the purpose of election concerning them. Wherefore,

II. The particular objective destination and intention of our Lord’s death, cannot belong to the ground of the Gospel call or of faith,—any more than *election* can do; while these are materially the same thing. As people are not to make any inquiry, whether they be among the elect; before they venture to believe in Christ: This is just the same thing, upon the matter, with saying,—that they are not to make any inquiry, whether they be among the persons for whom or in whose names Christ shed his blood;
blood; before they venture to receive and rest upon him in the Gospel offer.

III. In the case of a sinner’s justification, “Law and justice have no respect to the particular objective destination or intention of Christ’s satisfaction and righteousness; as any way belonging to the pleadableness thereof at the bar of law and justice.” Which the same thing as to say,—that the sinner is not to plead upon any former purpose of GOD or CHRIST concerning him, in the providing of this satisfaction and righteousness; but he is to plead upon the thing itself, as presently and freely exhibited to him in the gospel: And this plea is sustained at the bar of law and justice, so that he is acquitted there,—for the sake of this satisfaction and righteousness; not for the sake of any former purpose of God or Christ concerning him, in the providing thereof. And so,

IV. In the case of a sinner’s justification, law and justice are to be considered as having a respect,—“only unto the justice-satisfying and law-magnifying nature of this atonement and righteousness.” For it is not any act of God’s purpose, or of Christ’s intention, that can be proposed and set against the claims of law and justice upon the sinner; unless such a thing were to be proposed, for invalidating and abrogating their claims: But it is only the glorious nature of the atonement and righteousness, which can be proposed and set against those claims; and which only law and justice can have a respect unto, in this case,—as that whereby their claims are fully answered and satisfied. Any other ground of plea, from the particular destination or intention of our Lord’s death,—must be altogether foreign, improper and irrelevant, in the present case: So that the bringing of Christ and his blood within the reach of faith, can have no manner of dependence on such a ground.

And it may be further observed here,—That though law and justice have no respect to the particular objective destination or intention of our Lord’s satisfaction and righteousness as to what particular persons the same was designed for; yet there is a general objective destination and intention thereof, which they have a respect unto.

And
And wherein lies this? It doth not lie in any particular act of God’s purpose about the death of Christ, or of his intention in dying; but it is a thing interwoven with the glorious constitution of his person. For law and justice did not get him to deal with as a private person, of Adam’s ordinary posterity: But they got him to deal with, as one upon whom they could have no original claim from the tenor of the covenant of works,—and therefore as a public person in the human nature; whose atonement and righteousness could not be for himself,—but was necessarily, in the very nature thereof, for the benefit of mankind-sinners as such. Now,

V. In whose behalf is it, that law and justice have a respect unto the justice-satisfying and law-magnifying nature of Christ’s atonement and righteousness? It is not in behalf of every mankind-sinner indifferently: But it is “in behalf of every sinner who is found betaking himself thereunto by faith, upon the divine warrant,” (which has been explained); “as the same is unto all and upon all them that believe, without any difference.” It is the express testimony of scripture, and a most material testimony in the present case,—which, if duly considered, might be decisive of the whole controversy; that the New Covenant righteousness is unto all and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference. At the bar of law and justice, no regard is paid to any difference among men; either from their outward characters in the world, or from God’s foregoing determinations and appointments concerning them: No consideration is had of who were elected, or who in particular were the purposed and designed objects of our Lord’s death. There is no further question at that bar,—but who are taking up their stand by faith, upon the glorious foundation of Christ’s righteousness (including his atonement); and it is sustained for all such, unto their justification: It is unto them all, for the full benefit thereof; and it is upon them all, as their sufficient cloathing,—their robe of righteousness.

The sovereign Lord has a secret counsel in heaven, where this righteousness is considered as wrought out for his chosen people; and allotted for them only, as such. But he likewise has an open court on earth, where the judgment
judgment is set in the sinner’s conscience, by an efficacy of his word; law and justice being seated on the tribunal. And it is a fundamental statute of his kingdom,—that in this court the Surety-righteousness be proceeded upon, according to the intrinsic merits of the cause; in behalf of every law-condemned sinner who is taking up his plea and rest thereupon by faith, as the same is freely exhibited to him in the gospel: And all this without any regard to that peculiar consideration which is had of persons, in the secret council above. Thus, though elect and believers will prove to be all one in the event; yet the matter is ordered by such a mystery of divine wisdom and sovereignty, as to leave no bar in the way of believing,—with respect to any, wherever the gospel comes.

Moreover, while law and justice have only a respect to the justice-satisfying and law-magnifying nature of Christ’s atonement and righteousness, in behalf of every sinner who is found betaking himself thereunto by faith; yet this is not on the account of his faith, or for the sake thereof. His faith takes up the claim; but it no way belongs to the ground of his claim, or the matter of his righteousness. It is only believers, whom law and justice can find standing upon the ground of the New Covenant righteousness; and being so found, they, as law-condemned sinners in themselves,—are acquitted and justified upon the account of this righteousness.

And so the case is represented, [in Acts x. 43.]: To him give all the prophets witness; that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. According to the tenor and method of dispensation, at the bar of law and justice, it is not whosoever was elected,—or whosoever was designed and intended to be an object of Christ’s death, in the former transaction of the New Covenant; but it is whosoever believeth in him, upon the present administration of that Covenant by the gospel, that shall receive remission of sins; the door being equally open to all, in the way of believing.——Again, though it is only all that the Father giveth him who in the event shall come to him; yet our Lord says, [John vi. 37.], Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out: The door stands open to every comer, whose warrant and entertainment
entertainment depends upon the opening of this door to him in the gospel; and not upon there having been any particular view had of him, in the former appointment or offering up of the great sacrifice for sin.

The sum of the matter is this; That the Lord is pleased to gather his elect from among others, by such a dispensation of the gospel as takes no more notice of them than others. All the peculiar respects which the purchased redemption has to them, all the particular respect which Christ had to them in his death,—is altogether abstracted from, in the dispensation of the gospel. The glorious Redeemer, with his plenteous redemption, is equally set forth to all by the gospel; for being received and rested upon, according to the present revelation and exhibition to every one,—not according to what views were had of particular persons, in the original providing of such a Redeemer and redemption. And this unlimited method of dispensation, is what the Lord blesseth for gathering in his elect: while they are gathered in upon no other ground, by no other invitation or welcome, than what is common to them with all other hearers of the gospel; who therefore must be left inexcusable, under an heinous aggravation of their guilt and punishment.

Article III. The bad Import of Mr Mair’s Doctrine on this Head, laid open.

It may appear, from what has been said;—that the supposition of Christ’s having died for all mankind is of no necessity, nor of any propriety, for being taken into the ground of the Gospel-call. But this is not the worst of it: For the taking in of such a point is, in itself, of a very sinful and pernicious consequence. As

I. This new doctrine about the Gospel-call, natively tends to lead people away from the revelation of grace; to seek an imaginary ground for their faith, in the decree of election: Because the act of God’s will determining the particular objects of Christ’s death, which was complied with by his intention in dying,—is materially the same thing with election; as hath been evidenced. Nor can
any real difference be conceived of here, without adding a Socinian scheme of election to that which is laid down in the scriptures; as if, beside an absolute election of some to be the objects of Christ’s death for their eternal salvation, there were likewise a conditional election of all to be so: And then they would have to seek the immediate ground of their faith in their own free-will.

But when people are taught, that there is no sufficiency in the death of Christ, for them to rest upon by faith; without a consideration of his having died in each of their names: If once their hearts, as well as their heads, go to work this way; they must find themselves reduced, in plain terms,—to seek out the sufficiency of his death for them, from a consideration of their being among the elect. Because the real sufficiency of Christ’s death to faith, cannot be conceived, in good earnest, to have any dependence upon God’s appointment and Christ’s intention about the particular objects thereof; more than upon the decree of election: As the real nature of his atonement and righteousness,—cannot be any way affected or limited by the one, more than by the other; which is no way at all.

II. This new doctrine about the Gospel-call, makes a wide attack upon the sovereignty of God: Because it plainly imports, that the general call of the Gospel could not be warrantable and reasonable; unless the purchase of redemption had been made for each of those to whom the same is, or may be exhibited by the Gospel. But on the contrary, it belongs to the rights of God’s sovereignty, that he may justly call men to take up with redemption through Christ; without any dependence upon the consideration of whom the purchase was particularly made for.—Because the Lord has his elect to gather out from among others, by such a general dispensation; and because this redemption is, in its nature, a sufficient and suitable good for all men,—necessary also for their glorifying God; and because it is the natural duty of all, to take up with such a good, whenever it is proposed to them,—without his being accountable for their want of ability to perform the duty: And because the limited nature of the purchase, has no tendency to straiten the
door of the sinner’s access by faith; seeing this access is not by
the door of God’s purpose, but by the door of that
proclamation which he makes in the gospel,—so that no sinner
can meet with any repulse, who comes to embrace the
purchased redemption in a way of believing: And at the same
time, the Lord’s making a gift of faith only to those for whom
the purchase of redemption was made, doth no way injure or
abridge the freedom of others; as none who hear the Gospel
can in the event prove destitute of faith, but those who sought
it not,—yea who despised the mystery of faith in Christ, and of
redemption through faith in his blood.

III. This new doctrine about the Gospel-call, natively
tends to lead people away from paying any immediate regard
to the sovereign will of God therein.—The Lord’s will, as
revealed in the general call of the Gospel, is certainly the
proper reason and rule of duty to his creatures: And they
should yield obedience to his call, for this reason, that he gives
it; without pretending as if they ought first to be satisfied about
the reason why he gives it in such a general way. But,
according to the new doctrine, people must first have a rational
account given for the general call of the Gospel; nor must they
be satisfied with any reason for it, beside what is forged in the
scheme of universal redemption: And thus, instead of
stooping immediately to the LORD’S will in the Gospel-call,
on its own account; they must derive all their regard to it, from
their own fancies about the reasonableness of it.

IV. Though this new doctrine pretends to give a clear and
rational account for the general call of the Gospel, and so to
make good sense of the Gospel; nevertheless, it turns the same
into gross nonsense and absurdity. For, according to the
universal scheme, as now proposed,—every Gospel-hearer is
called to know, that Christ’s blood was shed for him in
particular; as the payment of his debt, a satisfaction for his
guilt. And how is he to know this? It is not first in the way of
believing; but he is to know it before he believe, as the ground
on which he may believe: He is first to know that the thing is
certainly true; after which, he is to come forward to a believing
that it is true: He is first to appropriate the blood of Christ,
by a knowledge of its having been shed for him; after which, he is to appropriate the same, by a faith of its having been thus shed.—But there is certainly no understanding that can make sense of all this.

V. This new doctrine about the Gospel-call, natively tends to lead people away from making any direct or suitable account of our Lord’s atonement and righteousness, in the matter of redemption: Because it leads them to build their confidence, not upon this atonement and righteousness as exhibited to them in the Gospel; but upon a notion of its having been particularly designed and intended for them,—as the payment of their debt, a satisfaction for their guilt,—and no doubt accepted of as such.

If a man were going to be relieved by his friend, from prosecution by his creditor; the only thing which is of any direct and proper consequence to the man, for his relief in law, is this,—that his friend have got a clearance made for him with this creditor: It is all one, as to the man’s relief, whether the clearance was made by paying the whole debt,—or any small thing, as accepted in place of the whole. And though the glorious mystery of redemption must be greatly perverted and reproached, in explaining it by any such similitude; yet after this manner, according to the new doctrine, it is to be conceived of: That the great thing, yea the only thing which faith has a direct concerning with,—is the notion of our Lord’s atonement and righteousness having been designed, intended, and accepted for every person, in full of all demands which law and justice had upon him; so that the glorious nature and value of this atonement and righteousness, in itself considered,—must come to be looked upon as what people have little or nothing ado with, being of no immediate consequence to their faith. And this natively leads in to the Socinian error, That God might have saved fallen man without the intervention of any ransom: For, according to the new scheme, it is not any thing in the nature or value of the ransom,—but only a supposed act of God’s will concerning us in the providing thereof, that faith has any proper and immediate business with.

VI. Tho’
VI. Though this new doctrine about the Gospel-call, pretends to make the Gospel a great deal more full and free to men than is consistent with the doctrine of particular redemption; yet all the truth of the Gospel is thereby taken away from them, and a scheme of vain imaginations put in its stead: So that all the advantage which it pretends to give them, comes to issue in woful delusion and disappointment. For,

1. When people are entertained with the doctrine of universal redemption, it has a real and plain tendency to promote their carnal security; or to quench any dreadful apprehensions of their natural condition: Because it leads them to fancy, even in their state of unbelief,—that they are all free from the curse of the Covenant of works, by Christ’s dying for them.

2. The scheme of universal redemption can give no real, but a mere imaginary comfort and encouragement to men; unless there were added to it, a scheme of universal salvation. To tell people that Christ died for them all, though not for their sakes, is but a way of amusing them. Yea, this scheme leads them to most unworthy apprehensions of God, as if he were one who could not be much trusted in; when he is represented as having brought about a very large purchase of redemption, and then mostly dropping or failing in the application of it.

3. The preaching of Christ crucified, or of his cross, is made of none effect by this new scheme. For thereby the death of Christ is set forth to men, as having no certain or real connection with salvation; the purchase of redemption is set forth, as having no certain or real connection with the application thereof: And people are thus left to conclude, that though they take up their rest on Christ’s death, as set forth to them in a general way by the Gospel,—yet they cannot be sure of salvation through it; or that though they come to make application of his blood, as set forth to them in the said general way,—yet they cannot be sure of finding peace and pardon in it, or of obtaining redemption through it. And at best, any assurance which they can have in all this matter, is not to be founded upon his death and blood,—any further than as they come to find within themselves, that they have attained to such or
or such an improvement thereof; so that their assurance must come to be founded upon their own attainments. Moreover, if it be not a *conditional* purchase of redemption which has been made for all, leaving the application thereof to a woful dependence on themselves; but if it be an *absolute* purchase of redemption which has been made for all, notwithstanding that few come to be saved: Then the dreadful meaning of the scheme must be,—that till once persons know themselves to be among the elect, they are to conceive, that Christ’s blood may not by far so readily be of use for redeeming them unto salvation; as for redeeming them from the *law-curse*, unto a deeper damnation by what is called *Gospel-wrath* and *vengeance*.——And thus, whatever way the scheme be viewed, it leaves nothing of true Gospel among men.

VII. This new doctrine about the Gospel-call, leaves *no true* or *solid ground for faith* to go upon: Seeing it corrupts the Gospel in such a manner, allowing of no certain or real connection betwixt the death of Christ and salvation. It allows none to depend upon Christ for salvation, *in believing*; or otherwise than *because of their believing*: So that their faith of salvation through his blood, must be built upon some other pretended faith in his blood.——But this is to be further considered in the following section.

**Section III. Concerning the Warrant of Faith.**

The debate about the warrant or ground of faith, doth very much coincide with the question about the Gospel-call; and accordingly, it has been so far considered under the foregoing head: Yet a further view may be here taken of that matter.

The doctrine contained in Mr *Mair’s* Dissent, upon this head, is,—“That some universal objective destination of the death of Christ, as having in some sense died for all mankind, necessarily belongs to the pleadableness of Christ’s satisfaction and righteousness at the bar of law and justice; so that the sinner’s plea, to be proponed and sustained at the bar of law and justice,—is a claim of right to Christ’s blood, arising from the foresaid universal objective destination.” The
The plain amount hereof is, That faith’s warrant for applying the blood of Christ, or the ground upon which it is to do so,—lies in a right to this blood, from its having been shed for all men in each of their names; that this is to be the ground and matter of faith’s plea at the bar of law and justice, as if Christ’s satisfaction and righteousness were not otherwise pleadable at that bar: Doctrine plainly subverse of our received principles on this head, as laid down from the holy Scriptures in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms*.—And here, the true warrant or ground of faith may be explained; the truth on this head vindicated, and the bad import of Mr Mair’s doctrine concerning it laid open.

Article I.  The true Warrant or ground of faith explained.

It is justly declared, in the seventh article of the Synod’s act about doctrine; That “the formal ground and reason of faith—doth no wise lie in any particular objective destination of CHRIST’S satisfaction and righteousness, or in any particular objective intention wherewith he made and fulfilled the same: But it wholly lies in the glorious Person and Offices of CHRIST, with his satisfaction and righteousness,—as freely and equally set forth by the Gospel, unto all the hearers thereof;—with the LORD’S gracious call and command, for each of them to come over by faith unto this glorious foundation; and with absolute promises of justification and eternal life through CHRIST to mankind-sinners as such in the Gospel, the possession of which blessings is to be certainly obtained in this way of believing.” What is here said about the ground upon which faith proceeds, and the reason of its procedure in closing with Christ, has been explained already,—as it respects the Gospel-call; while faith yields obedience to that call, in coming over to the same ground upon which the call proceeds,

*Our received principles on this head, are set forth in the Committee’s Illustration; from those passages of Scripture, and of our subordinate standards,— which are quoted upon the seventh article of the Synod’s Act about doctrine.
ceeds,—and unto which it freely invites. But for a further clearing of this matter, it may be observed that,

I. True justifying and saving faith is very mysterious, both in its nature and exercise; as Christ believed on in the world, belongs to the great mystery of Godliness*. Though faith be no wise an irrational work, it lies very far above the sphere of a rational work: Though saints do by no means act irrationally, when they believe,—yet there is something much higher in believing, than an acting most rationally. It is therefore a gross and dangerous mistake [p. 134.], to suppose,—that the sure ground in the object of our faith to lean on, must be rationally evinced: For, in working faith, the Lord doth open the eyes to behold wondrous things; he brings forth to the light, and makes to behold his righteousness†. And this plainly says,—that the sure ground in the object of our faith to lean on, is a thing with respect to which the most rational unbeliever is woefully blind; or as a person shut up in gross darkness, so that he can have no adequate view of Christ and his righteousness.

II. Faith acquires‡ a particular saving interest in Christ and his blood, with his whole righteousness and salvation; which interest it acquires therein, by appropriating the same to the person’s self.

There is a full warrant to believe, or a general right of access to Christ by faith, which all the hearers of the Gospel have before they believe,—and whether they ever believe or not; and, in this respect, the provision of the New Covenant is their own mercy: Which warrant or right, faith believes and improves. Yet faith is not a mere believing of an interest which the person had before; and it is no way a believing of any supposed interest in Christ’s blood,—from its having been shed for the person, as for every person. But a particular saving interest in Christ and his blood, is acquired by faith; such as the person had not before, or which did not hold true of him before he believed.

This new saving interest lies in being united to Christ, through an embracing of him by faith,—so that his righteousness

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*1 Tim. iii. 16. † Psal. cxix. 18. Micah vii. 9.

‡ That is,—by the instrumentality of faith a person obtains, or gets the property of what was not his before believing.
Of the Warrant of Faith.

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Teousness is graciously imputed to the person; who is therefore invested with this justifying righteousness, enjoys pardon and peace through the same, is accepted as righteous in God’s sight on account thereof,—and is endued with a personal right to all the privileges of the sons of God, as being graciously received into their number: And nothing of this can be pretended to hold true of any unbeliever, or to be any otherwise obtained than through faith.

Neither is it a mere possession upon a former right, that faith thus obtains. For as the general right of access to Christ, which all the hearers of the gospel have,—is only a right for coming to deal in the market of free grace; none can have any personal right in what is there set forth, any personal title thereto, till he buy the same in that market*: Where the sinner’s side of the bargain, without money and without price,—is just a giving up with all self-righteousness, and all creature-portions for his soul; in taking hold of God’s covenant by faith. And thus he is brought into the bond of the covenant, or personally instated therein; so as to be vested with a covenant-right and title, which he had not before: He takes out a personal right of interest by faith, upon the ground of that general right of access which he formerly enjoyed. Wherefore, Faith takes possession of Christ and his blood, with his whole righteousness and salvation,—just by taking out a new interest, a new claim of right and property therein; as it apprehends and applies the glorious charter of the New Covenant.

But this new interest in Christ and his blood, is not merely a benefit which faith acquires; or which a believer is privileged with: For it is also what faith believes; or what belongs to the material object of faith, in its direct outgoings upon Christ. Faith believes justification and adoption, as enjoyed through an imputation of Christ’s righteousness to the person. It believes the love that God hath to the person: It believes his being clothed with the garments of salvation, covered with the robe of righteousness; it says, Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength: It calls Christ Ishi (my husband);

*Isa. lv. 1. Rev. iii. 18.
And it calls God *my Father*.——And faith’s believing of all this, consists in a persuasion thereof: A persuasion by which the person *appropriates* to himself, what lies in common upon the field of the gospel; he thus *takes* it all home to himself and *makes* it all his own. But this appropriating persuasion is vastly different from any natural or general notion; nor is it any such persuasion as a person can work up his mind unto, from a rational evidence of things: For,

1. It is a *supernatural* persuasion. Not only the object about which it is taken up, and the evidence upon which it is formed, do far exceed any natural capacity or comprehension of the mind; but likewise the very acting of this persuasion, is far above any natural power or influence: As it is produced by a gracious, secret, invincible and sweet efficacy of the Holy Spirit; who implants the grace of faith; and doth *fulfil the work of faith with power*†.

2. It is a *lively* persuasion; or it is the act of a soul spiritually quickened, an exercise of new life from Christ: So that the whole soul is endued with a lively motion, flowing in to the goodness of the Lord‡.

3. It is a *seeing* persuasion. The Holy Ghost works as the *Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the knowledge of Christ*, so that the *eyes* of the *understanding* are *enlightened*: They are spiritually *opened*; and a divine light is sweetly diffused through the soul, which gives a real and ravishing view of Christ in the word ||.

4. It is a *receiving* persuasion. Hereby Christ himself, with his whole righteousness and salvation, is actually received and appropriated; as God’s free gift to the person: This persuasion of faith is the hand into which God actually puts the gift; and it joyfully receives Christ into the heart, with confidence of interest in him unto salvation§.

5. It is a *resting* persuasion; by which the soul comes to a satisfying rest in Christ. So that there is a prevail-

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† 2 Thess. i. 11.  ‡  Jer. iii. 22.
|| Eph. i. 17, 18.  §  John i. 12.
ing concern about the whole of salvation through Christ: And, at the same time, there is such a prevailing confidence of this salvation through him, as bring the soul to sweet rest and satisfaction; about all its concerns of pardon, acceptance, holiness, and eternal happiness*.

III. This *appropriating persuasion* which faith exerts, has a sufficient warrant and ground in the word of grace; in the offer and call of the Gospel: Without any respect to divine purposes and intentions, or to the person’s inward experiences. It greatly differs from that sensible assurance of an interest in Christ, or of salvation, which arises from a view of the Lord’s work in the heart; or which we are privileged with,—when the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And abstracting from all consideration of the Father’s purpose or Christ’s intention, about the particular objects of his death; it wholly proceeds upon the present revelation of Christ in the Gospel. There it is that faith meets with an object fully suitable and satisfying; even the glorious person and offices of Christ, with his satisfaction and righteousness,—as in themselves considered: And faith takes up a sufficient ground, a full warrant, for appropriating this glorious object to the person’s self,—with a firm persuasion of an interest therein to eternal life; just as it finds the same freely and equally set forth by the Gospel, unto all the hearers thereof,—with the gracious call and absolute promises which accompany that exhibition of Christ. For,

I. All the privileges and blessings of the New Covenant, are generally and indefinitely set forth by the Gospel, upon this very design,—That each person who hears it may take all to himself, in a way of believing; as there cannot otherwise be any proper entertainment given to the Gospel. An indefinite declaration is made of God’s name as the LORD OUR GOD, and of Christ’s name as the LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS,—and all covenant-blessings are presented to us in absolute promises; all which is certainly for being believed: But every person is to believe for himself, not for another. It is a mock-faith,—if a person believes only that some others have a saving interest in God, and Christ, and the promises; as

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* Matth. xi. 28, 29.
he hath no business about making this particular application to others: So that he is still a rejecter of the whole, if he do not believe with an appropriation of the whole to himself; while the revelation of grace is made to him for this purpose, or for none at all.

2. The declarations and promises of the Gospel are made to men with relative words, or terms suited for appropriation; such as, you, your, thou, thee, thy: And when these enter into the ear of faith, they immediately point out or specify the person; as all holding true of him in particular.——The Gospel is primarily dispensed to the congregation of the dead, men who are spiritually dead in trespasses and sins; as it is the glorious channel of divine influence for quickening them. And while a sinner continues thus dead, he can have no real apprehension of Gospel declarations and promises as belonging to him: Yea, it then continues to be one of God’s secrets, whether he shall prove to have any particular lot in that matter. But whenever the person is spiritually quickened, and thus brought to the hearing of faith; immediately the word of grace strikes the ear of faith, as spoken to him: And he credits it with terms of appropriation.—Me, my, mine.

3. As thus there is no presumption in the appropriating persuasion of faith; while it only corresponds to the very design and nature of Gospel declarations and promises, by way of obedience to God’s call: So there can be no delusion or falsehood in it, but it is a matter of infallible truth.——For when faith is beholding Christ, he is then revealed in the Person*; by a glorious and sweet light from him as the Sun of righteousness, which gets entrance into the eye of faith;—and Christ is revealed in the person as presently made his own, by a free and actual gift which faith believes: Though still, it is not Christ in the heart, but Christ in the word, whom the person receives and claims for his own; just as one takes up with the natural sun, not in his own eye, but in the firmament.

According to the mysterious dispensation of the New Covenant,—when the hand of faith is stretched out in receiving work, God is then actually putting the gift into that hand: When the mouth of faith is opened, God is then

*Gal. i. 16.
then filling it abundantly*; filling it with Christ as the bread of life, and with his blood as drink indeed: When a person is believing the righteousness of Christ to be his own, for justification and eternal life; God is then making it his own, by a gracious imputation thereof: And thus Christ himself, with all his benefits in the free promises of the Covenant, is really made the person’s own,—just as he is believing all to be his own. Faith’s receiving act, is an act of belief or persuasion: It truly receives,—as the eye receives light, as the hand receives a gift, or as the mouth receives food; but while it thus receives from God, as he reaches out the blessing in the word of grace, and so receives what the person formerly had not,—this is just a believing that he presently has it all for his own. Such a wonderful power and privilege it is, which God bestows on true faith; that he makes all to be personally and savingly the man’s own,—just as the man is taking all to himself, and making all his own, by an appropriating persuasion of faith.

But the warrant, the formal ground and reason of the person’s faith or persuasion, as to all this matter,—doth no way consist in what experience he has of the Lord’s special and saving way of dealing with him. As when a friend is offering any thing by way of a free gift to a person,—it never comes to be personally his own, till he actually receives it: And he then claims it as his own, not on the footing of his act in receiving it; but of his friend’s offer by which he was warranted to receive and keep it. Just so, as to faith’s claim of right in Christ, (with his satisfaction, righteousness and whole salvation),—it is no way founded upon a person’s experience of the Lord’s enabling him to receive by the appropriation of faith, nor yet upon his own act in receiving: But it is altogether founded upon the Lord’s free offer and call in the Gospel, as what still continues to be the ground of claim.

**Article II.**  *The Truth on this Head vindicated.*

What hath been said doth somewhat explain the nature and exercise of faith, as it proceeds upon the present revelation of Christ in the Gospel; without any

*Psal. lxxxi. 10.*
respect to the erroneous and false ground of Christ’s having shed his blood for each of mankind, or of a pretended right to his blood on that account. But for vindicating this subject from the great misrepresentation thereof, and for dispelling the thick mist which is raised thereupon by Mr Mair’s new doctrine; it may be further observed that,

I. The declarations of grace about an interest in Christ and his blood, are not for being applied to any one in particular before he believe; but only in his believing.—The purposes of grace, indeed, have an application to particular objects from all eternity, in the counsel of God: Which yet continues a secret to every one; till he make his calling, and so his election sure to himself. And the declarations of grace about the general claim or right of access to Christ (in respect whereof unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, sent to bless us), which all the hearers of the gospel have,—are applicable to each of them before they believe, or though they should never do so. But the declarations of grace about an interest in Christ and his blood; as when it is said,—He hath borne out griefs and carried our sorrows, was wounded for our transgressions, was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, with his stripes we are healed, the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all;—and when he is said to be the Lord our Righteousness, made sin for us, made a curse for us, the propitiation for our sins, our peace, delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification: Though these, and such other declarations, are to be set forth in the dispensation of the Gospel,—for being applied by faith upon the foresaid general right; yet they can never be applied to any person in a state of unbelief. They are not to be reckoned true of every one before he believe, as the reason why he should believe; for they hold true only of such as are in due time made to believe: And even such cannot know these declarations to be true of them particularly, but in believing; while they have a sufficient ground and reason of faith laid out for them, in the offer and call of the gospel.—These declarations, then, are always to be considered as the language of faith; not of carnal reason or unbelief: And as always true to per-
sons in the mouth of faith; but never as true to them in the mouth of unbelief, which cannot really speak any truth about Christ.

II. That truth about Christ and his blood, which justifying faith immediately terminates upon, is a matter of present truth; and considered only as such.—In the case of justification, or at the bar of law and justice, faith has no backlook on divine purposes and intentions; it takes no consideration of what may have been formerly true about the person, in any counsels of the Father and the Son concerning him; it makes no inquiry, whether any particular eye was had to the person, in the former appointment and offering up of Christ’s sacrifice: But it looks straight out to Christ as revealed in the word, to his blood and righteousness as there set forth; and on the ground of the free exhibition, it applies all to the person’s self;—or it takes up a saving interest in Christ, a claim of property in his blood and righteousness, by the appropriation which has been explained. And this interest, this claim of property, is not a former truth, which faith took rise from as the ground and reason thereof; but it is a present truth, which faith terminates upon as the material object thereof,—in the supernatural mystery of its appropriating act. Thus faith apprehends the blood of Christ as a full payment of the person’s debt, a full satisfaction for his guilt in particular; it believes that his blood is so, it pleads and rests upon the same as such. But in what sense is it, that faith takes the blood of Christ to be such a payment and satisfaction for the person? Not in the sense of its having been formerly designed to be so; but of its being presently sustained to be so, at the bar of law and justice,—according to the sovereign method of grace. Whom it was particularly that Christ offered up the atonement for, and for whom the Lord received it off his hand, is a matter no way considered in the present case: But God and Christ are presently offering this atonement in the word of grace, to be received by faith; upon which ground faith receives it*, appropriates it, and rests upon it,—as an atonement for all the person’s guilt, unto eternal salvation.

III. This

*Rom. v. 11.
III. This interest in Christ’s blood is fully satisfying to faith, and fully satisfying to the conscience.——The law brings home a most particular charge upon the conscience; and faith gives as particular an answer thereto, in appropriating Christ’s blood: For faith is said to drink his blood; and it is therefore found as particularly belonging to the person, as anything which a man has drunk into himself. Faith has thus a most particular claim to the blood and righteousness of Christ,—so that law and justice find the person standing in a most particular relation thereto by faith, and giving in the same as a most particular answer to every law charge; which is sustained as fully relevant in law, for his absolution: And the person rests in an assured confidence of the full payment of his debt, or of a full satisfaction made to justice for his guilt; by this atoning blood.—Moreover, as faith could have no footing in the universality of redemption; which admits of no certain connection between the death of Christ and salvation: So it has no immediate concern with the particularity of redemption, as any way belonging to its ground and warrant; or yet as any bar in its way. But, according to the doctrine of particular redemption, it finds an inseparable connection between the death of Christ and salvation: And as faith has immediate access to his death and blood in the word of grace,—it finds a full salvation necessarily coming along therewith, through a most efficacious merit; and it takes hold thereof as a glorious link, which infallibly brings the whole chain along with it unto eternal redemption.——Wherefore, this interest which faith takes up with in Christ’s blood, contains the most abundant and overflowing satisfaction to the whole soul.

IV. In all this matter which has been considered, faith acts most properly; or (to use Mr Mair’s expression) faith acts as it is faith.—There is no question but that “Faith, as such, must always terminate on a record or testimony;” and that “in its proper nature it is the soul’s Amen to the divine record or testimony, and so setting to the seal that God is true:” And that “where the sinner by faith apprehends good to himself, this good must be brought within the reach of a particular

“applying
“applying faith; in a record bearing the sinner’s claim thereto.”
But there is no such thing in all the Bible, or any way belonging to the gospel of Christ,—as a record or testimony to every person, That Christ’s blood is the payment of his debt, a satisfaction to law and justice for his guilt; according to Mr Mair’s doctrine. And if there cannot be a sufficient ground for faith to build upon, in appropriating Christ’s blood as a payment of the person’s debt and a satisfaction for his guilt,—unless this very thing were particularly recorded and testified to the person before-hand; it must then follow, that there is no sufficient foundation in scripture for the faith of pardon, acceptance and salvation: As it will not be pretended, that there is any record or testimony in all the Bible,—particularly telling every or any person that he is pardoned, accepted, and will be saved. Moreover, supposing there were such a record or testimony in Scripture as Mr Mair allleges; what could it signify to a person who were in earnest about his salvation? What could it avail to his faith? Certainly a man could find no peace or comfort to his soul, from such a payment of his debt and satisfaction for his guilt as is common to all; such as leaves his salvation at an utter uncertainty, and a thousand to one but it must land him in hell rather than heaven.

But true faith, faith in earnest, proceeds upon a quite other sort of testimony; even that testimony which the gospel bears concerning the person, offices, satisfaction and righteousness of CHRIST, in themselves considered,—with the intrinsic suitableness and sufficiency thereof for the sinner, the offer of all made to him in a way of free promise, and the Lord’s call requiring his acceptance thereof by faith: And thus, the good of the Covenant is brought within the reach of a particular applying faith; in a record bearing the sinner’s claim or right of free access to the same. And though faith acts toward this general testimony with love, desire and delight; yet faith is not thereby left to be a mere act of love, desire or delight,—as Mr Mair allleges. But it acts most properly, as faith; crediting, saying Amen, and setting to the seal to the divine testimony. And how does it so? Not as a mere human or historical faith, which confines the parti-

ularity
cularity of its assent to the particularity of a testimony: No; but it acts as a divine faith, according to the real mystery of its nature. Thus, by an appropriating act, it extracts a particular treasure out of God’s general testimony; while this general testimony is given out, just for every one’s faith to make it particular to himself. And so faith appropriates the blood of Christ,—as the payment of the person’s debt, a satisfaction to justice for his guilt; such as will infallibly and sweetly issue in his eternal salvation.

V. As faith is thus exercised upon Christ, it enters by him as the door into the house of mercy; and here a most glorious prospect lies open to its view: So that it looks backward, upon the purposes of divine love and grace toward the person from all eternity; and it looks forward, with a lively hope, upon the person’s salvation to all eternity.—No man is called or allowed, at first instance, to look back on any counsels of the Father and the Son concerning him; by believing that Christ intentionally died for him in particular. But the person must first turn his eyes straight forward to the open door of the house of mercy, so as to enter thereby; and he thus comes within view of all the glorious things in that house, from the one end of it to the other. JESUS CHRIST is evidently set forth to sinners, before their eyes, crucified among them*; a present revelation and offer is made of him as crucified, or dead,—for them to rest upon, in the way of receiving him by faith: And faith receives him with appropriation,—saying, Christ is mine, his satisfaction and righteousness are mine: It speaks not immediately of what was, or will be; but it says, he is mine, these are mine,—upon the ground of that present offer which faith accepts. Moreover, the believing of this present interest in Christ, is directly a faith of eternal life and salvation by him; as lying secured in the merit of his death: And it is directly a believing,—that whatsoever Christ did for the redemption of mankind, he did it for the person; as faith deals not immediately with the former intending, but with the present sustaining of all this for the person.

Such is the direct exercise of faith, in the case of justification: And when it thus appropriates its object, it has

*Gal. iii. 1.
a glorious privilege, under the Holy Spirit’s influence,—of
going farther and farther out upon its object in the word; so
that it looks backward and forward through the wide field of
grace, in ascending the hill of God. It rises up to a view of
election, in the Lord’s everlasting love; to a view of Christ’s
amazing love, in laying down his life for the person; and to a
view of the soul’s portion in the land afar off, which makes to
rejoice in hope of the glory of God.—But still it is a present
interest in Christ by a present receiving of him, that sinners
have immediately ado with. And as it is the duty of all who
hear the Gospel, to take out or verify this saving interest to
themselves,—by the appropriation of faith; so these other
blessed interests (here spoken of) will always be found
inseparably connected therewith, in the chain of free grace.

What has been said concerning faith, respects a due
exercise thereof,—according to the scriptural view of the
matter; not according to what imperfections of its exercise may
readily be found in the Lord’s people. All should be earnestly
crying for this precious faith, as it is the gift of God: And
those who have obtained it, should aim at progress in the lively
exercise thereof; saying unto the Lord, Increase our Faith.

Article III. The bad Import of Mr. Mair’s Doctrine on this
Head, laid open.

The warrant of faith, with its nature and exercise in proceeding
thereupon, according to our received principles,—has been
considered. What remains on this head, is, to point out the
very sinful and pernicious import of Mr Mair’s new doctrine
about Faith’s Warrant or Ground. And,

I. This new doctrine about faith, is for excluding all
imputation of Christ’s righteousness to any; in the case of
justification. Because if faith’s plea at the bar of law and
justice, be that of a foregoing interest in Christ’s blood as shed
for the person,—a foregoing interest therein as a payment of
the person’s debt and a satisfaction for his guilt, and so a
foregoing personal interest in Christ’s righteousness; this can
leave no room for the imputation of

his
his righteousness: As GOD’S *sustaining* of such a plea, could not import a bestowing of any *new* interest in Christ’s righteousness, by imputing it to the person; but only an acknowledging of that *former* interest, which the person is alleged to have in common with all others.

II. This new doctrine about faith, is for excluding all *appropriation* of Christ’s atonement and righteousness from the nature of faith. Because, if this appropriation have any sense at all,—it must be a person’s *taking* to himself for *his own*, and *claiming as his own*, what he *had not before*, and doth not reckon to have been his own before; but he presently receives it to be his own, in the confidence of its being so upon the ground of the present offer: And as faith thus *appropriates* Christ’s atonement and righteousness, God sustains the appropriation by a gracious imputation thereof to the person. But if faith pleads upon a foregoing personal interest in this atonement and righteousness, it cannot be said in any sense to *appropriate,*—but only to *acknowledge* the same.

III. This new doctrine about faith, is for excluding any such thing as the *obtaining* of an interest in Christ by faith. Because a personal interest in Christ as an atoning High Priest, is presupposed as the ground of faith; and therefore it cannot remain to be obtained by faith: So that however far this kind of faith may pretend to obtain communion with Christ, or salvation by him; it can have no pretence to the obtaining of any new interest in him, but only to an improving of a pretended former interest.

IV. This new doctrine about faith, is for depriving it of all its *certainty* and *assurance,*—as to pardon, peace and acceptance with God. Because it can find no certainty or assurance about that matter, unless it be in the blood or cross of Christ: But if he shed his blood for all, and if one’s faith is to rest upon his blood as thus shed for that person among others; then faith can have no certainty, no assurance about pardon, peace and acceptance through his blood to the person,—except these blessings were sure through it to all. Such a payment of the person’s debt, such a satisfaction for his guilt, as is *common to him with all who perish,*—can afford no room or ground

for
for his faith, as to any confidence of safety from wrath or of
God’s favour.

V. This new doctrine about faith, is for putting salvation
wholly out of the reach of faith. It indeed makes a great
pretence of bringing Christ’s blood within the reach of faith:
Which should rather be called a bringing it within the reach of
carnal reason and unbelief; when this is pretended to be made
true in the mouth of the most careless and stupid infidel, Christ
died for me. But the alledged bringing of his blood within the
reach of faith, is in a way of denying any inseparable or real
connection between this precious blood and salvation; by
teaching that it was shed for all mankind: And the pretended
interest in Christ’s blood as shed for him, which a person is
directed to rest upon, being common to him with all others; it
cannot afford salvation to him, any more than to all others,—
which it never does. Thus, alas! While people are made to
think that they have a more free dispensation of the gospel,
which brings the blood of Christ so very near them as shed for
them all: Yet, in this way, his blood is not set forth as bringing
salvation with it, but as leaving the same far behind it; so that
faith in his blood, or of the said interest in his blood, could not
be a faith of salvation.

VI. This new doctrine about faith, is for turning it into a
work of delusive reasoning; instead of true faith. Because
when a person is told that he should come to the blood of Jesus
as shed for all men, and therefore as shed for him among
others; and when thus he is not allowed to think that salvation
is inseparable from Christ’s blood, or that there is any
immediate connection between it and salvation,—as but very
few of those for whom it is alledged to have been shed are
saved: The person must then try some method for having such
a connection made up to himself; or must get something to
intervene betwixt the blood of Christ and his salvation,—for
establishing a connection between the two, and by which he
may rationally infer his own salvation from this blood. And
what is he to get for such a purpose? It can be no other than
some degree of concern about sin and salvation, some earnest
pleadings upon Christ’s blood for salvation; with some
Period III.  

Of the New Scheme about Faith.

acts of love and desire toward his blood, or of delight in it. And when a person finds within himself, that he has attained to these things,—he must then infer that he is one of those, not only for whom, but also for whose sake Christ died: And he must thus make out a rational conclusion or inference, that the blood of Christ will afford salvation to him, though it does not so to the most part of others for whom it is also supposed to have been shed.—Such is evidently the way of this new scheme, for turning the faith of salvation into a mere course of vain reasoning; nor is it possible to get the scheme relieved from this sad meaning and consequence: Which is just the same with what Mr Fraser teaches, in this remarkable position, [p. 134.], viz. “When therefore we come to believe, or know that we believe,” (or that we have attained to some kind of faith upon Christ’s common way of dying for men; which can only lie in such concern, pleadings, love, desire and delight, as above mentioned); “then we come to know that Christ hath died for us in that special way proper only to the elect: And knowing that Christ so died for us, we may assuredly conclude that we shall be saved.”

VII. This new doctrine about faith, is for turning sinners away from God’s covenant of grace; back to a miserable landing in the covenant of works. Because if it be the way above mentioned (and no other way the scheme can allow of), wherein they are to seek any sure footing for faith; any rest to their souls, about the great concerns of salvation;—that is, if they are left to establish a connection between Christ’s death and their salvation, by some intervening exercises and endeavours of their own; and thus to constitute the immediate ground for their faith of salvation, in their own exercises and endeavours: Their salvation must then have its immediate dependence on themselves, on some works of righteousness in or about themselves. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace*.  

Upon the whole; As the universal scheme, of Christ’s having shed his blood for all and each of mankind, is in itself quite erroneous and false; so it necessarily tends to banish

*Rom. xi. 6.
banish all true gospel and true faith out of the world; imposing a cloud of inconsistent and pernicious fancies, in the room thereof.

Section IV. Concerning the Doctrine of our Standards, about the Purchase of Christ.

Beside the particular errors which are vented, in Mr Mair’s paper of Dissent; it contains this general and erroneous position, viz. “That the purchase of Christ admits of a farther and larger consideration, than is treated of in our standards.” And,

I. A charge is laid against our reformation-standards, in the above position, without any tolerable appearance of reason for it; and which yet can import nothing less, than that these standards are very defective in their matter,—very useless, and very erroneous. As,

1st, What Mr Mair observes is very readily agreed to,—“That judicatories, in framing confessions or articles of faith, cannot be supposed to descend into the minute points of truth; but only to take notice of the great strokes or lines of truth, and principal leading articles of our faith.” But still, these more minute points of truth must be understood,—as falling within the compass of those principal leading articles of our faith; being comprehended or implied therein, and natively flowing therefrom. And so, a more particular assertion of what is contained in our standards, is not properly an addition to them; but an explication and vindication of them. But it is a quite other thing, or is properly an addition to our standards,—when any thing is taught “of a farther and larger consideration than is treated of in our standards;” or lying beyond the consideration of what is there laid down: Beyond “the subject-matter treated in our standards,” as Mr Mair expresses it.—Now, if our standards need any such addition, they must be defective: And if they need it about such a fundamental point, such a principal and leading article as the purchase of Christ; they must then be very defective, as to their matter.

2dly, The particular use of our Reformation-standards, is for being tests of orthodoxy and soundness in the faith; and
and to shut the door against errors: Or to prevent the teaching of any thing about the subjects there handled, different from or contrary to what is therein evidently contained. And it cannot be a proper salve for any new doctrine; to say (as Mr Mair does) that it runs in a full consistency with our standards; for this is usually pretended, even when these standards are very plainly undermined: And who will not pretend so, when he makes himself a judge in his own cause?—But if the principles of church-members, and especially of public teachers in the church, are not to be measured and known by her public standards of doctrine; or if the door be left open, for teaching other points which lie beyond the subject-matter of these standards,—under the pretence of a full consistency therewith: These standards must then be very useless.

3dly, When our Reformation-standards of Doctrine do treat of any subject, they do it generally; without giving any hint, as if they only took a limited and particular way of handling the subject,—or were leaving out some part of the matter: And thus they profess to take in the whole extent or compass of the subject; so as to exclude every thing from belonging thereto, which is not comprehended in these standards. But if there be something about such a weighty subject as the purchase of Christ, which is not comprehended in our standards,—and therefore excluded by them; they must then be very erroneous.

II. Though Mr Mair extends the above position about our standards, to all the new scheme of universal redemption; it is more immediately laid down by him, for introducing a new scheme of doctrine about the extent of our Lord’s mediatory kingdom,—with the common benefits and privileges which men enjoy: In opposition to the sixth article of the Synod’s Act about doctrine*.

There

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*It is a most unaccountable part of the new scheme in Mr Fraser’s book,—that the death of Christ should be reckoned necessary for procuring common or temporal benefits to men; or that such a price should be taught as paid for such a purchase: When, according to that book.—“If the Lord had pleased he might have pardoned sin and given salvation, without appointing his well-beloved Son to die;—

“might
There is no manner of question, but that our LORD JESUS has a dominion over all things as Mediator; in which he governs them spiritually and supernaturally, with a subserviency to the great work of Grace: And as all the accomplished work of grace (though not the eternal purpose thereof), is indeed the purchase of Christ; so it is only through this purchase, as a proper fruit and effect thereof,—that any things can become actually subservient to that glorious work. But it is a quite other thing, and most eversive of scripture-truth,—to say that all things belong to Christ’s mediatory kingdom, even as they are things of this world; or as they are governed in an earthly, secular or natural way, toward their natural ends.

This kind of government, or administration, belongs to him as the MOST HIGH GOD,—the Sovereign Lord of Nature: And it is an essential prerogative of his Godhead, thus to govern the world which he has made; so that he could no more lay aside the actual exercise of this government, than he could do his Supreme Deity,—and could no more make a purchase of the one than of the other. Yet if it were not as God but as Mediator, that he is now governing all things in their natural course towards their natural ends; this would necessarily say, that his divine administration in common providence, and so an essential prerogative of his Godhead,—were presently superseded, sopited, or laid aside,—giving place to another tenor of administration: While, at the same time, such a view of matters must fill people with very carnal notions of our Lord’s spiritual kingdom.

Section V. Some general Observations upon the whole.

I. As to the general terms used in scripture, about the objects of our Lord’s death; these evidently make nothing for universal redemption, when the scripture is allowed to interpret itself: Yea, that universal terms

“might have saved fallen men, without the intervention of any ransom;—might reap the glory of his grace, in saving the elect, though Christ had never died for them.” p. 134, 167, 224.
terms about men should always be taken in an absolute sense, as signifying every individual of mankind from the creation to the day of judgment,—is most inconsistent with the common use of language. Moreover, the point of universal Redemption is no way preferable to the other Arminian points; in respect of a seeming countenance by some expressions of scripture, as broken off from their connection,—and taken absolutely according to their first appearance: Yea, the wicked doctrine about the power of man’s free-will in conversion, (which indeed goes natively along with the universal point),—has ten times more of that seeming countenance.

II. It is alleged, that the doctrine of particular redemption, which the Synod maintains, is not reconcilable with the analogy of faith; or with the harmonious consistency of scripture-doctrine: But it may appear, from what has been said, that such a pretence is altogether vain; while the universal scheme, instead of being conformable to the analogy of faith, is for turning the same into a mass of confusion. And in reality, it is not the analogy of faith, but the analogy of reason, with which that scheme pretends to agree; as the great scope thereof is, to bring the gospel under a more rational appearance. But however the universal way of extending our Lord’s death and the gracious love of God—may indeed seem to gain such a point; in making the general call of the gospel to agree better, at first view, with the standard of natural reason,—or to appear more reasonable and plain: Yet this seeming advantage is gained at a dreadful expense. For such an extending of Christ’s death and the Lord’s gracious love to all, is for making the same vain to all; by extending them further than salvation, and in a way of losing all their infallible connection with salvation.

III. There is no room for pretending that the doctrine of particular redemption, as maintained by the Synod, doth any way incroach upon the sufficiency of our Lord’s death unto the faith of all gospel-hearers. For they thankfully acknowledge all that sufficiency of his death which lies in the glorious nature thereof, with a sufficient exhibition thereof by the gospel; or a sufficient warrant, in the Lord’s offer and call, for every sinner who hears the gos-
pel—to take up the rest of his soul on that glorious foundation. Thus they acknowledge, that all legal bars are removed by our Lord’s death, out of the way of the justification of mankind-sinners as such who come to him by faith: While it is only a perfect righteousness and satisfaction in the human nature, not any divine purpose about particular persons,—that can any way belong to the removing of those legal bars. And so they acknowledge, that our LORD JESUS is an High Priest ordained for men: Though they cannot find in all the Scripture, that he was ordained for all men; in any further sense, than that he was ordained to be a perfect High Priest,—of sufficient capacity for answering the need of mankind-sinners as such, and to be so exhibited unto them by the gospel; without making any difference among men, as to their warrant for employing him, where ever the gospel comes. They do not therefore make any question, but that this sufficiency of our Lord’s death for all men is an appointed sufficiency; or was appointed to be just what it is: While every thing that really comes to pass in the world, is according to a divine appointment.

But when Mr Mair was urged to explain what he meant, by what he called the appointed sufficiency; he always turned it into the notion of our Lord’s death having been appointed for all men, as a ransom intentionally laid down in the name and stead of every one: And would not acknowledge it to be sufficient for all men to rest upon by faith, without such an appointment of it for them all. Yet how can any real sufficiency be found here, unto the faith of any sinner? Yea what an absurd thing is it to teach people, as if there could be no due sufficiency of our Lord’s death for them to rest upon,—without his being appointed to die for them; but that there is enough of sufficiency therein, without his being appointed to die for their sake? If people were heartily in earnest about salvation, when they are sent away to seek a sufficiency of his death for them to rest upon—in any former appointment of it for them; they could certainly find no satisfaction in a view of his having died for them, unless it was for their sake: And so they would be reduced to seek the ground of their faith in election; a most imaginary
and unwarrantable course, necessarily tending to land them in despair.

IV. People are grossly imposed upon, when they are told that the Synod have discharged Mr Mair to speak in the name of Jesus,—“for his asserting the particular claim that sinners have to Christ: And for asserting the warrant that every one has, to make a particular application of the blood of Christ; as the payment of their debt in particular.” The Synod never offered to deny the particular claim that sinners have to CHRIST: As every sinner in particular, who hears the gospel, has a full claim of right for coming to Christ; in that free revelation and offer which is made of him by the gospel. But where lies the claim which Mr Mair teaches? It lies in an universality of redemption as to purchase, or in Christ’s having made a purchase of all mankind: Which he tried to illustrate before the Synod, by the comparison of one purchasing a precious jewel in a cabinet; who makes the purchase only for the sake of the jewel, and yet purchases the cabinet along with it. Now, what sort of claim can sinners have to Christ, from such a way of purchase? No hearer of the gospel is immediately warranted to reckon, that he himself belongs to the jewel which Christ has purchased; but he is left to reckon, that he may a thousand times rather belong to the other body of mankind,—which is as the cabinet or box containing the jewel: And what satisfying claim, what real comfort can be found here; seeing the worthless cabinet or box is only purchased for being cast into the fire, when once the jewel is taken out of it?

Moreover, the Synod never offered to deny, that every one (who hears the gospel) has a warrant to make a particular application of the blood of Christ; as the payment of their debt in particular: Though they cannot acknowledge this in Mr Mair’s sense; as if every one had Christ’s blood to consider upon before hand, for such an intended payment of their debt as may well enough consist with their damnation: A miserable plea indeed! A miserable comfort to make application of! — But they teach, that every hearer of the gospel has a full and immediate warrant to make a particular application of Christ’s blood;
or to appropriate the same by faith, as presently sustained to be the payment of his debt in particular,—a payment infallibly securing his eternal redemption: As hath been already explained and vindicated.

In a word, the Synod teaches, that our Lord’s death, in the whole extent thereof,—is efficaciously meritorious of, and inseparably connected with eternal redemption, or salvation to the uttermost; so that a getting in to his death by faith, is just a getting in to complete redemption and salvation: And this most fundamental substance of the gospel, is what cannot possibly be maintained,—but by the doctrine of particular redemption. At the same time they teach, that the particularity of redemption is no ground of faith; nor yet lays any bar in the way of faith’s getting in to our Lord’s death: Because his death, his precious redeeming blood, is immediately laid open to the faith of all gospel-hearers,—in the free offer and call of the gospel; without any respect to divine purposes or intentions concerning them particularly, in the sovereign providing of that ransom.

V. The Judicial-Testimony bears the following clause, in direct opposition to the new scheme of universal redemption, viz. “The Presbytery did and hereby do acknowledge, declare and assert; That the eternal Son of God, who was made manifest in the flesh, did in our nature, as the second Adam, the public head and representative of elect sinners, and the undertaking Surety for them,—yield a perfect obedience to the law as a Covenant of works, in the room and stead of elect sinners; and that, in their room and stead alone,—he bore the whole of that punishment threatened in the law, and incurred by the breach of it.”

In the Act concerning the doctrine of grace, which Mr Mair voted a full approbation of,—“universal redemption as to purchase” is expressly called “a doctrine which the Presbytery rejects and condemns; as contrary to the Scriptures, and our Confession and Catechisms.” Yea the Presbytery do therein expressly reject and condemn the following tenet and opinion, which is just the sum and substance of Mr Mair’s new scheme, viz. “That the free, unlimited and universal offer of Christ in the gospel, to

“sinners
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“sinners of mankind as such, is inconsistent with particular redemption; or, That God the Father his making a deed of gift unto all mankind, that whosoever of them all shall believe on his Son shall not perish but have everlasting life, infers an universal atonement or redemption as to purchase.”  Accordingly, in the Acknowledgment of sins prefixed to the Bond for renewing our Solemn Covenants, a general growth of Arminianism is lamented over; particularly this article, That Jesus Christ by his death has merited grace to all mankind,—which was the old Arminian way of expressing the point of universal redemption, or the merit of our Lord’s death for all men: And the said point or article is abjured in the oath of the Bond.

Progression VI. Concerning a Solemn Warning.

The Associate Synod having essayed a serious consideration of the deplorable state of matters at present, in Britain and Ireland,—as to the extraordinary height of sinning which prevails in these lands, with the Lord’s awful contendings and threatened judgments on account thereof; having also considered the duty incumbent upon them as watchmen, to give a seasonable warning about these matters;—and having appointed a committee of their number, to prepare a draught of such a WARNING: The same was accordingly laid before them, at their meeting in March 1758. And this draught having been deliberated upon,—at several diets of that, and of their ensuing meeting in August the same year; with prayer to the Lord, for his light and leading in the matter: And having undergone what amendments were judged necessary,—the Synod did (on the sixteenth day of the month last mentioned), approve of and concur in the said WARNING; and appointed the same to be published: The tenor whereof follows*.

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*It is only in this edition, that the Solemn Warning is distinguished into several Parts,—with particular titles; being all one continued piece, under the general title,—as emitted by the Associate Synod.
A SOLEMN WARNING, by the ASSOCIATE SYNOD IN SCOTLAND; addressed to persons of all ranks in Great Britain and Ireland: Wherein the great sin, danger, and duty of the present generation in these lands,—are pointed out and declared.

INTRODUCTION.

Though the Lord might justly consume a sinful nation, by the fire of his wrath,—without any delay of threatened judgments, and without opening any door of hope for escaping the same; yet he exercises much forbearance,—using various means, in his word and providence, for their conviction and reformation,—that their deserved ruin may be prevented: And he hath employed watchmen upon Zion’s walls, to give warning of danger,—discovering the sin which exposes thereto, and calling to fly therefrom in the way of duty; of faith, repentance, and reformation. As to this matter, the Associate Synod would essay to exoner themselves unto the present generation in these lands,—whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear; while their case is evidently hastening to a crisis,—the morning of the Lord’s day of visitation, for their manifold transgressions and their mighty sins, seeming to be already come upon them.

There is nothing more certain, however little considered, than that the wrath of God is kindled against a sinful land; and wrath, when it is not fled from in the way of duty, bringeth the punishments of the sword*. And as to every watchman in such a land, the Lord hath expressly declared,—that if, when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people: Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh

*Job xix. 29.
taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head:—But he that taketh warning, shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned: If the sword come and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman’s hand*.

It is here supposed, that the watchman seeth the sword come upon the land; and that, in a due attendance upon the business of his office, he may and will do so. But what he is thus to see and give warning of, is a different thing from the sword’s being actually come in the course of providence; or from its having already made a bloody entrance into the land: For this is a thing so evident and sensible, that persons cannot need any warning of it from him; and the warning must then be too late. That coming of the sword which the watchman is to see, in order to the warning which he ought to give,—is not such as may be seen or discerned by the bodily eye: It is another sort of coming, in the way of God’s threatenings,—as these are leveled against a sinful land. There is no need of any new intimations from heaven, for determining when it is that the punishments of the sword are to be feared. The ancient threatenings of the Lord’s word about this matter, were given with a respect and applicableness to the case of a sinning people in all succeeding periods. And it is not merely according to the actual frowns of Providence, that the application of these threatenings may and ought to be made: but it is chiefly according to what provocation the Lord gets by prevailing wickedness; especially in a land which he has eminently favoured. Upon this ground is the watchman warranted to apply the threatenings of the Lord’s word: And thus it is that he may see the sword come upon a land,—even before any appearance thereof to common observation.

The Lord our God is holy,—infinitely and unchangeably so. He is still taking the same account of sin, and his holiness still bears the same opposition thereto, as ever; an opposition which can be no less effective now than formerly. What he hath said about this in his word, he is still

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*Ezek. xxxiii. 3, 4, 5, 6.
still saying. He still says, of a backsliding and wicked people,—

*Mine eyes are upon all their ways, they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes;—* they have defiled my land, they have filled mine inheritance with the carcases of their detestable and abominable things*: Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord; and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this†? The HOLY ONE, with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning, is still continuing to speak in the threatenings of his word,—according as any people do make themselves liable to the same. And when singular privileges, in a church-state, have been misimproved; when singular attainments have been fallen from; when, upon the ruin and burial of Reformation-work, there is a general prevalence of irreligion and profaneness,—with many gross corruptions and abominations; when a long dispensation of divine patience is abused,—unto a furthering of impenitence, a sinking deeper into carnal security; and when a people become still more incorrigible as to all this, not only under a great variety of mercies, but likewise under a course of lesser judgments,—so that *the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of hosts‡*: Then it is, especially, that the dreadful threatenings of the Lord’s word are to be considered as directed and pointed against such a people; for recompensing their ways with desolating judgments. Then it is, that *the sword is come upon the land,*—though not in the dispensation of God’s providence, yet in the declarations of his word. This is what the watchman should observe and see; and of which they are required, upon their peril, to give fair warning.

It is evident, beyond all controversy, that the kingdoms of Britain and Ireland are, at present, in a very critical situation,—as to their civil interests. Beside what strokes we have already fallen under, and are further threatened with, from our cruel Popish enemies abroad, with whom we are presently at war; such political corruptions and disorders have taken place, with such a confounding and blasting of national enterprises, as seem to be near

*Jer. xvi. 17. 18.  † Jer. v. 9. 29  ‡ Isa. ix. 13.*
forerunners of national ruin. But it is a woful error, to be looking no higher than certain instruments—for the spring of these evils; or to be considering them only as the natural effects of prevailing selfishness, luxury, and effeminacy. Whatever blame may lie at the door of particular instruments,—it is the Lord of hosts who should be first considered, as justly contending with us: And the grounds of his contending ought to be traced much deeper than the selfishness, luxury, and effeminacy, or any gross immoralities, which so generally take place; as these are evils which have sprung from the bitter root of more spiritual backslidings and corruptions,—in what respects the doctrine, worship, government, and discipline of the Lord’s house. And whatever political expedients may be used, there can be no hopeful turn in the state of these lands,—till persons of all ranks be deeply humbled before the Lord, under a sense of their grievous apostasy from him in those matters, with all other evils which have followed there upon; and till public reformation be set about, in matters ecclesiastical as well as civil.

HE A D  I.

The Great Sin of the present Generation in these Lands, pointed out and declared.

In essaying to point out and declare the great sin of these lands,—it is not necessary to take a separate view of the case all along; in each of the kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland: For many evils are immediately common to them all; and they must all be nearly concerned with such evils as are more peculiar to each,—from the near connection and mutual influence which take place among them. These kingdoms, then, may be mostly considered in a joint view,—with respect to the grievous backslidings and wickedness whereby they are exposing themselves to desolating judgments.

Section I.  A general View of the Case.

Article I.  Of the Great Mercies sinned against.

Our iniquities, which are great in themselves, will appear to be greatly aggravated,—from a consideration of the distinguishing favour which the Lord has shewed
shewed to these lands. And that we may give glory to the Lord our God before he cause further darkness, it is necessary to consider our sins under a view of the great mercies against which we have sinned: It is therefore proper, in the first place, —to mention the loving kindnesses of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us; and the great goodness towards these lands, which he hath bestowed on them, according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving-kindnesses*.

When the Lord Christ had ascended on high, and the rod of his strength was to be sent out of Zion—for gathering a people unto himself among the Gentiles; it was not long till the gospel of his grace made way for itself into these lands: He soon made these isles to wait for his law; and songs were then heard from this uttermost part of the earth, even glory to the righteous†. During the long night of Antichristian darkness and idolatry which succeeded, he did not utterly forsake these lands; he did not suffer the light of the glorious gospel to be altogether extinguished in them, but raised up some to be his witnesses from time to time. In the blessed period of the reformation from Popery, he made a new conquest of these lands to himself,—triumphing gloriously therein, over Antichristian darkness and idolatry; after a more distinguishing manner than in other kingdoms. When reformation-work had afterwards become very ruinous, he brought about an eminent revival thereof,—towards the middle of the last century: His house was again built, even in troublous times; and persons of all ranks did swear allegiance to Zion’s King. A dreadful apostasy, with a slaying of his witnesses, did indeed follow very soon: Yet the Lord again made bare his holy arm‡ for us, recovering these lands from the very brink of perdition in the gulf of Popery and slavery,—by the wonderful and ever memorable REVOLUTION, in the end of the year 1688: And, since that time, he hath been loading us with other remarkable benefits,—notwithstanding all our abuse of his great goodness. When the Protestant succession seemed on the point of being interrupted, so that the dreadful pit of Popery and slavery was again open-

*Isa. lxiii. 7. † Isa. xlii. 4. and xxiv. 16. ‡ Isa. lii. 10.
opening its mouth to swallow us up; the Lord mercifully interposed, in bringing about a peaceable accession of the Illustrious Family of HANOVER to the Throne of these kingdoms. He also mercifully defeated the unnatural and Antichristian rebellions which were raised, in the years 1715 and 1745, against the Protestant succession in that family: And he hath likewise, on various occasions, blasted the counsels and attempts of our Popish enemies abroad—for invading these kingdoms on behalf of a Popish Pretender. And it ought to be acknowledged as a particular effect of the Lord’s goodness, which further aggravates our great wickedness in this period,—that we still enjoy the blessing of civil liberties, beyond any other people, under the best-modelled government in the known world; and that we are privileged with one of the best of Kings, of the mildest administration,—our present Sovereign King GEORGE, who rules over us as the common father of his people.

Article II. Of our Sinning against great Mercies.

But we have sinned with our fathers; we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly*. Not only have we sinned by ourselves, but also with our fathers. The people of this generation have not given glory to God, by a due lamenting over and turning from the sinful course of former generations,—but have practically allowed the deeds, and filled up the measure of their fathers; whereby they have brought over the guilt of these deeds upon themselves. The Lord is proclaiming to us, in his word,—Even from the days of your fathers, ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them†. And the Lord our God is a jealous God; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him‡. He requireth that which is past ||: And he saith,—Behold, it is written before me; I will not keep silence, but will recompense—your iniquities and the iniquities of your fathers together§.

I. At the Reformation from Popery.

Though the Lord Christ has taken our uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, by singular dispensations of grace

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* Psal. cvi. 6. † Mal. iii. 7. ‡ Exod. xx. 5. || Eccles. iii. 15. § Isa. lxv. 6, 7.
grace and power; a course of opposition to the interests of his kingdom therein has been all along maintained, and sometimes with a most violent rage. His work of grace, in these lands, at the Reformation from Popery, was variously opposed: not only by idolatrous Papists, but also by many who professed to renounce all dependence on the Roman Antichrist. A party in Scotland, which hated the remarkable purity of reformation there, did at length prevail,—unto the setting up of a lordly Prelacy in the Church, with many gross corruptions of her worship and discipline; and such as bore testimony against those evils, were cast into a hot furnace of persecution.

At the Reformation in England, and afterwards in Ireland, the Episcopal government of the church was retained; with many other dregs of Popish corruption and superstition, in matters of worship and discipline;—and a monarchical supremacy in causes ecclesiastical, which had been taken from the Roman Pope, was annexed to the Crown: All which abominations were greatly promoted for many years, in a course of going back toward spiritual Babylon. The truths and ordinances of Christ were sadly borne down, in pressing the use of Popish habits and ceremonies; while a dreadful profanation of the Lord’s day, by spending a great part of it in riotous diversions, according to a book of sports,—was rigorously injoined by public authority. And multitudes, who contended for the purity of reformation, or refused a compliance with those evils, were grievously harassed,—in various methods of cruel persecution; methods which were of the same tendency, upon the matter, with the horrid Popish massacre in Ireland,—to overturn the Reformation-interest in these lands.

II. At the Reformation from Prelacy.

The Reformation from Prelacy, and its concomitant abominations, in the last century,—got no better entertainment. Though persons of all ranks in the three kingdoms did then come under solemn vows to the Most High God for prosecuting Reformation, and though the repairing of the Lord's House went on prosperously in Scotland for some years; yet manifold impediments were put
put upon that work in the neighbouring kingdoms, which greatly marred the progress thereof: And a spirit of malignancy, with a flood of Sectarian errors and delusions, soon prevailed,—under the usurpation of Oliver Cromwell; unto a grievous obstructing and defacing of the Lord’s work, in all the three kingdoms.

III. In the late Persecuting period.

But a more dismal scene was quickly opened, upon the restoration of King Charles II. The Reformation of the foregoing period was then thoroughly overturned and destroyed: The carved work of the sanctuary was broken down at once, with axes and hammers of many wicked laws,—by the very persons whose hands had but lately been lifted up, in solemn vows to the Lord, for maintaining and promoting the same. The glorious sovereignty and prerogatives of Christ, as the alone King and Head of his Church, were blasphemously transferred to a mortal man; by establishing in Scotland, and restoring in the neighbouring kingdoms,—the pretended royal prerogative and supremacy in all causes ecclesiastical. Abjured Prelacy was restored, and raised to a greater height; with all the corruptions and superstitions which belong to that hierarchy: Whereupon more than two thousand of Christ’s Ministers were ejected from their pastoral charges. Various and very heinous oaths were then imposed, and generally sworn,—abjuring the late work of Reformation, renouncing the solemn engagements which these nations had come under thereto, and sealing the manifold abominations which were substituted in its room. Religion was universally discountenanced, and treated with ridicule; the very name of Godliness became a reproach. The blackest perjury, and the greatest apostasy from the Lord, into which these lands were sunk,—was accompanied with an overflowing flood of the grossest profaneness and immorality: And all issued in a quick regress toward the horrid deeps of Popery.

At the same time, such as refused compliance with Prelacy, and the other prevailing evils,—were cruelly distressed for many years, under a series of tyrannical and persecuting laws; and that in the face of awful rebukes from
from heaven, by pestilence and fire. Even their absenting from the corrupt worship of the Prelatical church,—and worshipping God according to the rule of his word, though in private houses; were reckoned high crimes, and subjected them to a course of strange barbarities. Multitudes thus endured a great fight of afflictions: They were made a gazing stock, both by reproaches and afflictions; by cruel mockings, and a most arbitrary spoiling of their goods. Multitudes, of whom the world was not worthy, wandered about in deserts and in mountains, in dens and caves of the earth,—being destitute, afflicted, tormented. Many, after various other sufferings, were banished or driven away from their native country. Many suffered bonds and imprisonment, with cruel tortures; thousands of whom perished in loathsome gaols. Many, also, were obliged to seal their testimony with their blood, on scaffolds and gibbets; yea, in the open fields,—while merciless soldiers were impowered to be both their judges and executioners. And all these violences were exercised on them, with no less iniquity than inhumanity, during the period of about twenty and eight years; not for any crimes against the rights or interests of civil society but for the Testimony of Jesus,—because they would not concur in the prevailing course of rebellion against him, his laws and ordinances.

IV. At the Revolution.

Notwithstanding the great and glorious deliverance which the Lord wrought for these lands, at the Revolution,—by the PRINCE OF ORANGE, afterward King WILLIAM, of blessed memory; when all the remains of the Protestant interest therein, and of their civil liberties, were upon the brink of destruction: Yet the wickedness of the foregoing period was not suitably confessed and turned from, there was not any due rendering unto the Lord for his benefits,—on that singular occasion. The Prelatical corruptions of the church were retained in England and Ireland; without any improvement of their great deliverance, for the cure of their defections in matters of religion.—The abolishing of Prelacy in Scotland, was not from any consideration of its intrinsic evil
evil, as it had been formerly condemned and abjured; but only in compliance with the inclinations of the people. The establishing of Presbyterian church government and discipline, was in a way of abstracting from all sacred engagements which the nation was under thereunto: And the Reformation which had taken place betwixt the years 1638 and 1650, with the national vows then made unto the Lord on behalf of that work,—were therein overlooked and passed by, as if the same had never been; being left buried under the grave-stone of infamous acts rescissory, with other parliamentary deeds.

The General Assembly did embrace the civil establishment then made, without reclaiming against what was blameable in the same. They did not expressly approve the work of Reformation which had been attained unto betwixt the years 1638 and 1650; nor the faithful testimonies and earnest contendings for it afterwards. They did not particularly assert the perpetual and indispensable obligation of those solemn national engagements which all ranks were under, for reviving that work. They did not particularly condemn, or acknowledge, the various perjury and apostasy of the persecuting reigns. They did not, by any particular act, assert the glorious headship of Christ over his church, the divine right of Presbytery, and the intrinsic power of the church,—in opposition to the wicked usurpations which had been made upon the Redeemer’s royal prerogatives. And many who had been deeply involved in the perjury, apostasy, and bloodshed of the saints, under the two preceding reigns,—were received into full communion, without any censure, or signs of repentance.

V. The guilt of the present Generation.

And the guilt of all these evils, in the days of our fathers, continues to lie heavy upon the present generation. It is not merely with a Popish and Jacobite party, the direct heirs of former malignancy and blood-guiltiness, that God has a controversy to plead on this account; but also with persons of all ranks in these lands,—By the general apostasy of our fathers, under the persecuting reigns,
from that Reformation which the Lord had brought about betwixt the years 1638 and 1650; they woefully revived, and renewed upon themselves, the entail of the national guiltiness which immediately preceded that period. All this, with the guilt of their own evil ways, was perpetuated, by the sad misimprovement of the Lord’s glorious appearance at the Revolution. And we in this generation, even we continue to inherit those iniquities of our fathers; we are answerable to the HOLY ONE of Israel, for these, as standing grounds of his controversy,—which he has no way forgotten, during the long course of his forbearance: In as much as we have not asked for the old paths, where is the good way; we have not been duly humbled, on account of the wicked and treacherous departures therefrom; we have added to the wickedness of former times, while the Reformation formerly attained unto—continues to lie in ruins.

Thus it is that the Lord may justly visit upon the present generation—all the opposition which has been made to his work in these lands; all the rebellions which have been carried on therein against Zion’s King, ever since the days of the Reformation from Popery.——Particularly, he has inquisition to make for blood, the blood of his saints and martyrs,—which has been shed in a dreadful abundance through these lands, on account of their faithfulness to him. What was done against them, was done against himself; and he must yet be accounted unto for the same. We have no reason to think that this bloodshed is yet purged; as it has never been suitably lamented over, in a way of adopting the testimony which was sealed thereby. The voice of that blood still crieth unto God from the ground*. The souls of them, under the altar, that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held, are crying with a loud voice; saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth†? There is a dreadful cry of this sort against the present generation in these lands: And the Lord seems about to visit us, with a dreadful work of judging and avenging that blood.

*Gen. iv. 10.  † Rev. vi. 9, 10.
Section II. A particular view of the Case.

But it is necessary to take a more particular view of our manifold transgressions and our mighty sins,—as to our own evil ways in this generation, and the grievous corruptions which are still subsisting among us. As,

Article I. The Infamy which the Work of Reformation is lying under.

The Work of Reformation wherewith these lands were highly privileged in the last age, is a matter of infamy and odious remembrance in this generation. Any testimony in favour thereof is ridiculed, reproached, hated and opposed. The period of that Reformation is now called the time of the Great Rebellion; and all the great things which the Lord wrought for us in those days, are wrapt up in that odious name.

This cannot be excused, by all the intestine confusions and wars of that time, in the struggles for civil liberty; by any mismanagements or extremes in carrying on the Lord’s work, by the desperate issue to which the Sectarian party at length pushed matters, nor by the flood of errors and delusions which thereupon overflowed. Satan has been always busy, in times when religion flourished, or when Reformation was promoted,—to weaken the credit thereof, by stirring up tumults and heresies; which the Lord permits, for holy and wise ends. So it was, when Christianity was first planted among the nations; when it was at length established in the Roman Empire; and when the day of Reformation from Popery did afterwards dawn upon the churches.

During the period now spoken of, our Lord Jesus favoured these isles with an abundant sowing of his good seed; and had a great harvest of souls: The power of godliness had a remarkable prevalence, with a considerable measure of reformation as to the outward state of his church. Nor is it any real discredit to this work, that Satan was then busy in sowing his tares; and in blowing up a fire of melancholy disorders. Amidst all this, the Lord brought about a work in those days—
which was honourable and glorious: And he cannot bear that the reputation thereof should suffer, from any concomitant mismanagements or infirmities of men. The reproach which that work lies under in this period, is a deep ground of his controversy with us; and gives reason to fear, that the revival of it may be at a dreadful expence to these lands.

**Article II. The ignominious trampling on our Solemn Covenants.**

The Lord has likewise a great controversy with us, for our ignominious trampling upon those *Solemn Vows* and engagements to him, which persons of all ranks through *Britain* and *Ireland* did respectively come under,—in the *National Covenant of Scotland*, with the *Solemn League and Covenant* of the three kingdoms.

Under the persecuting reigns, these Covenants were wickedly condemned,—abjured, and burnt: And they were left buried, at the Revolution; without resenting the indignities which had been done to them,—and to the most high God, the great party in them. The guilt of this great wickedness, which the present generation has adopted, they have likewise greatly added unto; by an universal and continued violation of these sacred bonds, by rejecting the perpetual obligation thereof, and by treating them with manifold contempt. Yea, the public oaths of this period do stand in a formed opposition to these Covenants, as they are substituted in the place thereof; or do approve the opposition to our covenanted Reformation, which lies in the present settlement of matters.

It cannot be pretended, with any shew of reason,—that any of the things engaged to in those Covenants, were either sinful or indifferent; being evidently of moral and religious obligation, antecedently binding from the Lord’s word. Such a public and solemn manner of engaging to these duties, was no selfish device or will-worship; but a compliance with precepts, patterns, and promises of the holy Scripture,—as well as with the example of God’s people in other nations. And the bond of these Covenants was laid upon succeeding generations,
in the loins of their fathers. What was said of old time, in a way of solemn Covenant, the Lord reckons upon as said by the posterity: Of old time—THOU saidst, I will not transgress*.  

In these solemn Covenants, persons of all ranks did swear to the Lord of Hosts†. Thereby the three kingdoms did, in a special manner, become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ‡. Thereby they made a solemn profession of faith in the Lord Christ, and of allegiance to him: They espoused, and engaged to promote the interests of his kingdom, in a way of reformation: they bound themselves and their seed to be the Lord’s, in the same obedience of faith. And shall not the Lord visit, with his righteous judgments, for the desperate revolt which we have made,—in breaking these bands asunder, and casting away these cords from us?  

When a vow is vowed unto the Lord, in a matter lawful, even though indifferent beforehand, he will surely require it ||. Concerning the violated oath and covenant which Zedekiah had come under to the king of Babylon, the Lord made this awful declaration; As I live, surely mine oath that he hath despised, and my covenant that he hath broken, even it will I recompense upon his own head§. When the oath which had been made to the Gibeonites, was broken some hundred of years after,—he dreadfully punished the breach thereof, as of an oath which continued binding upon posterity**.  

And if the Lord takes such account of a vow, even in things indifferent; if he claims such interest in an oath which is sworn by him, though not unto him; if he so punished the breach of oaths sworn by his name, even when they were sworn to another party, about secular affairs,—and so punished the same in remote posterity: Shall we suppose, that he will not avenge our horrid violation of those solemn oaths which we came under in the loins of our fathers,—oaths which were sworn to him as the great party, in matters of highest and most indispensable duty? No: he hath given assurance of the contrary. He hath denounced, concerning such a gene-

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*Jer. ii. 20. † Isa. xix. 18. ‡ Rev. xi. 15.  
|| Deut. xxiii. 21. § Ezek. xvii. 19. ** 2 Sam. xxi. 1, 2.
ration of covenant-breakers, *I will break the pride of your power,—and I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my Covenant*.

**Article III.** *The Episcopal Government and Discipline.*

The church of Christ is woefully defaced and corrupted, in England and Ireland, by the *Episcopal Government and Discipline.*

Church-government by archbishops, bishops, their chancellors and commissaries, deans, deans and chapters, archdeacons, and all other ecclesiastical officers depending on that hierarchy,—is a thing very foreign to the Lord’s word, having no shadow of foundation therein; and is very opposite to that form of government which the Lord Christ has appointed in his church. He hath instituted no standing order of church-officers superior to teaching presbyters, or ordinary ministers of the gospel; and hath invested them with a parity of power, to be jointly exercised by them, in the government of his church. A bishop and presbyter are most evidently the same, in the language of the New Testament: The government of the churches there mentioned, was most evidently presbyterial: Nor is the smallest notice to be found there, of any church-officer employed to preach and dispense the sacraments—without a power of government and ordination. The magisterial and monarchical power now claimed by bishops in the church, is what our Lord expressly discharged among his disciples†: As the civil places and power of churchmen are manifestly opposite to the nature of his *kingdom*, which is not of this world‡.

Under this Prelatical government, the discipline which Christ has appointed in his church—is overthrown and suppressed. His laws, for maintaining the purity of his church,—for purging out errors and offences, for putting a *difference between the holy and profane* || in sacramental ordinances, and for thus vindicating his own glory as the Holy One of Israel,—are not permitted to be of any force. Lay chancellors, who even are not pretended to

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*Lev. xxvi. 19, 25, 29.  ‡ Matth. xx. 25, 26, 27.

be church officers, are authorized to inflict church-censures,—
to excommunicate and absolve; with a grievous prostitution of
all this to earthly purposes: And instead of satisfaction for
gross scandals, sums of money are accepted,—by what is
called a commutation of penance.

The form of government and discipline which properly
belongs to the Christian Church, is thus rejected; while
another, and a contrary form, of human device and institution,
borrowed from the Antichristian Church,—is maintained in its
place. And it is not to be supposed, that such offices and
ordinances, which have no stamp of Christ’s institution, can
have his blessing unto the Church; but, on the contrary, they
must have a baleful influence upon the great concerns of
religion,—the ingathering of sinners to Christ, and the building
up of his saints in their most holy faith.——Nor can he look
upon these corruptions in his house, but with high indignation.
His face is set against them; as he sits
upon the throne of
David and upon his kingdom, to order and establish it*. We
have reason to fear a deep pleading of his controversy on these
accounts; when he returns to build Zion, in the issue of his
forbearing dispensations.

**Article IV. The Corruptions of Public Worship.**

The public worship of God is grievously corrupted, in England
and Ireland,—by a multitude of superstitious inventions.

Without any countenance from the holy scriptures, or
from the practice of the Christian Church in her first ages;
public prayers are turned into a reading of imposed forms,—in
which there is a frequency of improper addresses, with
confused and vain repetitions. Hereby, also, great
encouragement is given to an idle and unedifying ministry;
while they are not even permitted to exert themselves in the
exercise of the gift of prayer, with which our Saviour furnishes
all those whom he calls to that office: The liberty of
Christians, in their joint addresses to the Hearer of prayer, is
restrained: And, for the sake of these imposed forms, the
office and influence of the Holy

Spirit

*Isa. ix. 7.
Spirit in prayer—has become a matter of profane ridicule; as the preaching of the word hath likewise been much depreciated and neglected.

Apocryphal books, containing some gross fables, are read in public worship,—along with, yea instead of the Lord’s word. Parents are laid aside from the office and privilege of presenting their children to the Lord in baptism; this being devolved upon a sort of persons called godfathers and godmothers. A private celebration of the holy sacraments is allowed; while the superstition of signing with the cross in baptism, of kneeling at the Lord’s Supper, and of bowing at the name of Jesus,—are enjoined and practiced. Superstitious offices for baptism, confirmation, the Lord’s Supper, marriage, churching of women, visitation of the sick, and burial of the dead,—are likewise imposed and used; as also some doctrinal errors and absurdities in the first and last of these offices, which have been long complained of, are still maintained. Superstitious habits are prescribed for churchmen, and worn by them, in their public ministrations. The simplicity and spirituality of gospel-worship is further depraved, by what is called antiphonal singing; by chanting of prayers, and instrumental music. A great many devised holidays, saints days, fasts and festivals, are likewise observed; with peculiar offices for the same.

This imposed model of worship, rites and ceremonies, in the public Liturgy, which is in a great measure derived from the Popish church,—being void of any institution or warrant from Jesus Christ, can have no title to his blessing upon it, for the edification of his Church. Yea, in so far as men are thus setting their threshold by his thresholds, and their post by his posts; they are really setting a wall between him and them*.—He left not the ancient tabernacle or temple, or the methods of his worship therein, to be framed and ordered by the discretion even of the best of men; far less has he left the modeling of his house and worship, under the New Testament, unto any human device or pleasure. As in the government and discipline, so in the worship of his Church,—the word of God is the only rule: and he is a jealous God, jealous of

all

*Ezek. xliii. 8.
all deviations from that rule. These human inventions about his worship, which greatly mar the power of godliness,—and the imposing whereof hath made a woful havock in his Church, ever since the Reformation from Popery; are abominable in his sight, and must greatly expose us to his righteous judgments.

And it is, especially, a heinous provocation,—that, by the Sacramental Test, a way is opened for the most flagious and vilest men to the holy table of the Lord. A partaking in the Sacrament of his Supper, and that according to the Liturgy, is made a qualification for even the meanest post or office in the state; and the minister is liable to a heavy prosecution, if he should keep back even the most wicked infidel who requires admission for such an end. Hereby that holy ordinance is dreadfully perverted and profaned; for which we may fear a dreadful reckoning.——At the same time, the promiscuous admissions to the Lord’s table which are now commonly practised in Scotland, as well as in the neighbouring lands,—do greatly add to the public guiltiness.

**Article V. The Royal Supremacy in Causes Ecclesiastical.**

The glorious sovereignty of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the alone Head and King of his Church, is sadly incroached upon and opposed,—by the Royal Supremacy in causes ecclesiastical.

The King is acknowledged as the supreme Head or Governor, on earth, of the churches of England and Ireland. Such jurisdictions and preheminencies spiritual and ecclesiastical, as by any spiritual or ecclesiastical power have been or may lawfully be exercised,—are annexed to the crown: And all churchmen are declared to have no manner of jurisdiction in the church, but by and under the King’s Majesty; who is vested with all power and authority, to exercise all manner of spiritual jurisdiction,—in hearing and determining all manner of causes ecclesiastical. The civil Sovereign is thus declared to be the head or fountain of church-power, from whence all authority and ministrations in these churches do spring;
is vested with all powers of government and discipline, and
constituted the sole judge of controversies, within the same.—
—The established Church of Scotland have also, by some
particular managements, subjected and subordinated their
ecclesiastical meetings to the civil power*; and have
practically devolved upon the crown, the ordinary right of
appointing fasts in the Church—with the causes thereof.

It is readily acknowledged by all the reformed churches,
in contradiction to the wicked usurpations of antichrist,—that
all ecclesiastical persons are subject to the authority and
jurisdiction of the Civil magistrate, in all things of a secular
nature, as much as any other persons within his dominions:
And as much power is ascribed to him, by the confessions of
those churches, about matters ecclesiastical,—as can be
claimed by any creature, without indignity to Zion’s King.

The Church is the kingdom of Christ, a kingdom which
is not of this world: And earthly powers have no authority
from him in that kingdom; while no creatures are intrusted
with any magisterial or legislative power therein. He hath
appointed spiritual office-bearers in his Church, with a
ministerial power only, for declaring and applying his laws:
And it is only in his name that all their ministrations should
proceed; as, in these matters, they are the servants of Christ,—
and not the servants of men.

Nor is there any reason for earthly powers to be jealous
of his kingdom, because independent upon theirs. The
government and discipline thereof are nowise calculated for
incroaching upon the proper rights or dignities of the civil
Sovereign: They extend not unto any controlling of public
administrations, or private liberties, in the civil state; they are
versant only about the consciences of men, and their spiritual
concerns; they include no secular encouragements or
compulsions: And whatever has, at any time, been pretended
or attempted otherwise, should not be ascribed to the
institutions of Christ,—but to the mistakes or corruptions of
men. At the same time, it is an essential law of Christ’s
kingdom in the Church,—that his people should be subject
unto the higher powers under

whom

*viz. In complying with the act of Parliament, about Captain John
Porteous.
whom they live, in all matters secular, and not sinful; whether it be to the king as supreme or unto governors as unto them that are sent by him; not only for wrath, or fear of punishment, but also for conscience sake*.

Our Lord Jesus is given to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body†. He is the ONE master, the ONE Lord and Lawgiver of his people, as to all spiritual matters‡. In respect of his kingly office, he is the head and fountain of all church-power; of all influence and government in that spiritual kingdom. This is an inseparable prerogative of his mediatory Crown; which cannot fit any head but his own, cannot flourish upon any other ||. The setting up of any visible head to his Church, on earth, must be an innovating of her constitution,—and very prejudicial to her spiritual interests. Any subverting of his kingdom, by transferring the rights thereof to the kingdoms of men,—must be an high provocation to the eyes of his glory.

**Article VI.** The sinful Terms of the incorporating Union.

The public corruptions which have been mentioned, came to be further established and aggravated,—by the incorporating Union of England and Scotland.

No sinfulness is pretended to lie in that matter, under any civil consideration thereof. An Union of these kingdoms, in itself, is, no doubt a blessing to them both: Particularly, as it might be improved to the great advantage of religion and reformation. And our fathers, in reforming times, would have rejoiced at the prospect of an incorporating Union so improved.

But, in the present case, we have been incorporated upon terms inconsistent with and opposite to the Covenant-union which was formerly attained. The maintenance of the hierarchy and ceremonies, with other corruptions of the English church, is made a fundamental article of that Union; and a solemn consent has been given thereto, on the part of Scotland.

Thus

* Rom. xiii. 1.—5. 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14. † Eph. i. 22, 23.
‡ Matth, xxiii, 8, 1 Cor. viii. 6. James iv. 12.
|| Psal. cxxxii. 18.
Thus it is that our Covenanted Reformation, with our former Covenant-union and uniformity, are deeper buried; and a new security is given, by both kingdoms, to the opposite corruptions. This settlement of matters is likewise approved of by the public oaths: And various other evils, as to the state of religion in Scotland, have been consequent thereupon.

A superstitious form of swearing, by laying the hand upon and kissing the Gospels, was soon introduced from England. Presbyterians from Scotland, when serving the Sovereign in England or Ireland, have come to be involved in the sacramental test. An almost boundless toleration was granted; such a toleration as gives countenance and encouragement to errors and corruptions, with an hinderance of ecclesiastical discipline. The use of the English Liturgy was set up in many places of the land. Countenance is given to an yearly observation of holidays, in the end of December.——

And a door has been opened for new advantages to the kingdom of darkness, in the Lord’s righteous judgment; by repealing the penal statutes against witches*.

By all this, our guiltiness before the Lord has been greatly increased.

**Article VII. The Antichristian usurpations of Patronage.**

The heritage of God is grievously oppressed and laid waste, through Britain and Ireland,—by the Antichristian usurpations and tyrannical exercise of Patronage.

There is not any one thing more indisputably fixed in the holy scriptures, and even in the common principles of reason,—than the title which Christian congregations have to a free choice of their own pastors, or spiritual guides; so as none may be violently intruded upon them, or settled without their consent. This is an essential and unalienable right, conferred by Zion’s King upon his subjects: while no creatures, in either a civil or religious capacity, are warranted to act as lords over God’s heritage†.

Even

*See the Note on this matter, Vol. I. p. 164.
†1 Pet. v. 3.
Even inspired Apostles, who had an extraordinary gift of discerning spirits, did leave the churches to a free exercise of that right,—as is most obvious in the New Testament. This privilege is necessarily supposed, in the obligation which they are under to care for their immortal souls; to try the spirits,—to beware of false prophets, and of the instruction that causeth to err*: An obligation which they cannot be divested of, nor devolve upon any. And the sovereignty of Christ in his spiritual kingdom, is wickedly invaded,—by whatever incroachments are made upon the liberties of his people.

But so it is, that the Churches of Christ in these isles are robbed and spoiled of this most important privilege. Very few parishes, in England or Ireland, are allowed to chuse their own ministers: They are generally planted by the will of Patrons, in a secular way, without any regard to spiritual interests.—And the Antichristian right of Patronage, which is bought and sold as any temporal estate or merchandise, is restored in Scotland. It is become the universal door of entrance into the ministry, wherever there is a Patron; that is, through almost all the parishes of Scotland: Nor is the body of the people permitted any where to have a free choice. And the established judicatures of the Church, especially the higher, have practically got beyond the considering of Patronage as a grievance; they readily concur therewith: Yea, in a series of most tyrannical and arbitrary managements, they have pushed matters even beyond what the law of Patronage requires.

The Churches, in these lands, are thus reduced to a most miserable situation. They are mostly filled with a corrupt and unevangelical ministry, not of Christ’s sending; who have not entered by his door, but climbed up some other way. Particularly in Scotland, the Lord’s heritage is violently destroyed; his flock is scattered, by a ruling with force and cruelty; their Christian rights are contumeliously trod upon, for gratifying the carnal interests and lusts of men: The pulpits, through all corners of the land, are more and more filled with intruded hirelings.

And

*1 John iv. 1. Matth. vii. 15. 2 Pet. ii. 1. Prov. xix. 27.
And how dismal must the consequences of all this be, as to the great interests of religion,—the honour of Christ, and the salvation of sinners! His heritage is wasted, the means of the great salvation are suppressed: And the face of a Christian church is like to be lost among us; by its being so far perverted into a human and secular constitution.——But he will plead for his heritage: He has an year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion†; and it appears to be drawing nigh.

Article VIII. The Flood of damnable Errors and Delusions.

The great evils already pointed out, have introduced an overflowing flood of damnable errors and delusions,—with a woeful eclipse of gospel-light.

The principles of natural religion, the light and laws of nature, have been exalted,—as in themselves sufficient for leading sinful men to everlasting happiness. Their natural reason, or knowledge, hath been set up,—as the regulating principle or foundation of what doctrines ought to be admitted in religion, and as their only guide in religious exercises. The obtaining of saving grace, in the use of common means, has been taught to lie within the reach of mens natural abilities and powers; with an independency of human actions upon any immediate divine concourse. Mens everlasting happiness has been set forth as their chief and ultimate end, to which their glorifying of God should be subordinated. Self-love, interest, or pleasure, has been recommended,—for the sole and universal motive and standard of all virtuous and religious actions; that the goodness of these actions lies in a concurring with mens natural self-love, to secure and promote their own well-being as their chief end: And they have been taught to seek an interest in the favour of God by their own moral virtue, claiming such an interest on that account. The whole doctrine of the Covenant of Works, wherein Adam represented his posterity, with the doctrine of original sin and corruption,—has been rejected. Yea, the proper Deity of our LORD Jesus Christ,

† Isa. xxxiv. 8.
Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, hath been blasphemously impugned. Likewise, other gross and dangerous errors have been vented,—whereby the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, concerning the person and mediation of Christ, are wickedly subverted: Manifest indignity is done to the work of the Holy Spirit upon the souls of men, in their regeneration and conversion; his whole peculiar and supernatural operations are reviled; and all the serious exercise of godliness is treated with gross ridicule.—Such errors, taught and disseminated by professors in public Universities, have been brought to the bar of the supreme judicatures in the Church of Scotland; and dismissed without any proper check. The blasphemy against the Son and Spirit in the Holy Trinity, was far from being adequately censured: Nor was any other of these errors particularly condemned. Yea, the wicked scheme of self-love was embraced,—under the colour of our delight in the glory and honour of God.—And there is too much reason to apprehend, that such errors are very generally prevailing through these lands.

The present generation abounds with infidels; who reject the holy Scriptures,—the doctrine of the adorable Trinity, and the whole Christian religion. Most daring and ludicrous attacks are made, without control, upon the Christian mysteries and institutions. Almost all the current writings of this age, concerning religion, are on the side of infidelity and libertinism; or of opposition to the peculiar doctrines of Christianity. The fashionable part of those who retain the Christian profession, have gone into the scheme of subjecting God’s decrees about men to their own behaviour, maintaining a conditional universality of redemption; ascribing a freedom of will to fallen men, for that which is spiritually good; suspending the whole efficacy of divine grace upon the pleasure of that free-will; and denying the infallible perseverance of the saints. The truth of Christ’s mediatory righteousness and satisfaction, the imputation thereof to sinners for their justification, yea the whole doctrines of the Lord’s word about free grace and saving faith,—are commonly denied, or subverted; made the objects of sneer and raillery, by such as pretend to a refined taste. The doctrinal articles,
and Confession of Faith, which are of public authority in the established Churches of Britain and Ireland,—are no longer any evidence of what religious principles are actually held by the generality of ministers or people in these Churches.

The preaching of Christ crucified, and of the several mysteries which depend upon or are inseparably connected with the doctrine of his cross,—is gone out of fashion. These matters are no more to be heard of, from the pulpits of the corrupt ministry which now much prevails,—than in the schools of heathen philosophers; except that some Christian terms may be used, without any inculcating of Christian truths: And, instead thereof, the poor people are entertained with harangues of Paganish morality. A general contempt is thus poured upon the great doctrines of the gospel, which broke forth with eminent luster at the Reformation from Popery; those blessed doctrines, whereby the consciences of men were led to a sweet rest,—which they had sought, in vain, from masses, indulgences, pilgrimages, penances, and purgatory. We retain the name of Protestants, while the marrow and substance of the Protestant religion is generally discarded. The Christian salvation is gone out of sight, out of request,—among the most part of this generation; with unspeakable loss and hazard to multitudes of precious souls.

And when matters are come to such a pass,—though the saving doctrines of the gospel are still taught and acknowledged by a smaller part, of several denominations, in the three lands; what shall we think that the end of these things will be? The God of truth, the glorious Redeemer of the Church,—is highly dishonoured and provoked thereby: And we have reason to fear that he will dreadfully vindicate the glory of his religion, his redemption,—against such errors and abominations.

Article IX. The uncommon height of Practical Wickedness.

Looseness in principle hath produced a corresponding looseness in practice: The prevailing corruptions of doctrine are followed, among persons of all ranks,—
Period III.  

A Solemn Warning.  

by a very uncommon height of practical degeneracy, debauchery, and profaneness.

The rulers, civil and ecclesiastical, and the people of all sorts,—have greatly corrupted their ways. The very form of religion is despised by many. Among our great men, and the whole fashionable part of this generation,—little favour, yea or shadow of real Christianity, is to be found remaining. The worship of God is generally banished out of their families: And it is now held for a point of polite breeding, a mark of good sense,—to reject and scorn all serious appearances of the fear of God. A kind of politeness is also brought into religion, which hath mostly extinguished the truth and power of it.—The meaner people, at the same time, are much sunk into gross irreligion: Very few, comparatively, have any appearance in their families or ways of living—from which they might properly bear the name of Christians.

There is a general contempt of the gospel, and neglect of the great salvation. Practical Atheism abounds, with profane mockings at the mysteries of religion. Brutish ignorance of the gospel overspreads,—through the prevailing of ignorant and corrupt teachers: And the people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; generally living without any concern about their souls, or regard to a future state. Popish abominations are gaining ground: The Antichristian and idolatrous mass is frequented, in many places through these lands. The Holy Scriptures are burlesqued; divine ordinances are contemned; and public worship is widely degenerated into a sort of theatrical entertainment. A heinous profanation of the Lord’s name is carried on,—by imposing a frequent and unnecessary repetition of oaths, sometimes on the same day; by false swearing, particularly in Customhouse-oaths; yea, by a general mixing of blasphemous oaths and curses with ordinary conversation, especially in our fleets and armies. The holy Sabbath is commonly profaned,—by neglecting both the private and public duties of that day; by frequent and unnecessary journeying; and by attending to secular business, or carnal amusements.

Many are without natural affection, unmindful of relative duties, unruly, disobedient,—enemies to the autho-
rity, peace, and welfare of the civil government under which they live. The lands are defiled with murders,—rioting and drunkenness. There is an epidemical prodigality, vanity, and lasciviousness, in apparel; with fornications, adulteries, and uncleanness of all sorts: And the profane diversions of the stage, masquerades, night-assemblies, balls, and promiscuous dancings, are greatly run upon,—as powerful incentives to all that wickedness. Fraud and injustice, in dealings betwixt man and man, doth much abound; and the wicked practice of smuggling, which is commonly attended with perjuries, and often with profanations of the Lord’s day. There is, likewise, a woful course of oppression; lying, dissimulation, evil-speaking, backbiting, malice, envy,—and covetousness, which is idolatry.

Such is the prevailing complexion of the present age; for which the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of these lands. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint; we are a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters: The threatened issue whereof is,—to have our country desolate, and our cities burnt with fire.*

Article X. Corruptions among the Sober and Religious.

The Lord hath, also, many deep grounds for contending with those who have not been wholly carried away by the authorised and gross corruptions of this age,—or have been, in some measure, testifying against the same.

Among the sober part,—many content themselves with the morality of heathens, rather than of Christians. Among the sober and religious part,—the power of religion is greatly decayed and worn out, while an empty form thereof is generally rested upon. The purity of gospel-doctrine is little understood, or relished: And the concerns of public reformation are become an object of great aversion, or indifference. Few are acknowledging the grounds of the Lord’s controversy; and fewer lay them to heart: But gross darkness covers the people, with a spirit of deep sleep.

The

*Isa. i. 4, 5, 7.
The dissenters, or Non-conformists, in England and Ireland,—are wofully degenerated. They are much crumbled into sectaries, of unscriptural principles and denominations: And many pernicious errors of the time, which have been mentioned, do prevail among them.—The generality of such as retain the Presbyterian character, have, in a great measure, given up with the precious truths of the gospel,—the doctrines of free grace; and many of them are plunged into damnable errors: Neither do they evidence any serious concern about the government and discipline of the Lord’s house, or about the revival of his buried work in these lands.

Some of those who bear out a religious character, in Scotland,—have embraced Sectarian contrivances; in opposition to the unity of the true catholic church, the Presbyterian order and government of the Lord’s house; and the use of public Confessions, or Catechisms, for maintaining soundness in the faith.—Others of them are going down the stream of the fashionable corruptions. They satisfy themselves with the corrupt doctrine which prevails: Being also drenched in latitudinarian principles about church-government, and church-communion. A new scheme of religious delusion, has filled many of them with great abhorrence of any public testimony for our covenanted reformation, or against the prevailing evils of this period*. And all who essay to maintain such a testimony are, on all hands, become the objects of public hatred and contempt.

At the same time, there is a general decline among those who appear on the side of that testimony,—as to the power of godliness, and religious zeal: Beside what grievous defections have fallen out among them.—We are little affected with those evils against which we profess to bear witness, and with the many tokens of the Lord’s indignation at this day. Our own sins are not duly lamented over, while we profess to testify against and lament over the sins of others; whereby the Lord is heinously mocked: And there is little due concern among us,—about such a conversation as becometh the gospel, the

*That which was introduced by Mr George Whitefield; in the year 1742, and afterwards.
the profession which we bear, and our solemn engagements to
the Lord. We are chargeable with a great abuse of our
privileges, and of the Lord’s singular providences in our day.
We are far from being suitably exercised in lamenting after the
Lord,—with earnest pleadings for the promised revival of his
work, in his merciful return to us and this whole generation.—
On these accounts, some have been left to dishonour their
profession by scandalous immoralities,—and thence several
have fallen away from it: The Lord is greatly hiding his
face,—withdrawing from ordinances, and restraining the
gracious influences of his Holy Spirit. He hath a controversy
with his people*; even the most sober, religious, and
faithful,—of this generation.

Conclusion of this Head.

The declaration which has been now made—is not given
forth as a full account of our great wickedness in these lands.
Our transgressions are multiplied, beyond reckoning; neither is
there any stop of their increase.—A general view of the dismal
case is here proposed, with a detail of some leading instances:
And a more particular enumeration has been made of public
evils, respecting Scotland, in the Act, Declaration and
Testimony, emitted by the Associate Presbytery; which is
maintained by this Synod.

HEAD II.

The great Danger of the present Generation in these Lands,
pointed out and declared.

Article I. The desperate appearance of our condition.

And our condition, with regard to these evils, is of a very
desperate appearance.—The Lord has been at much pains
with us, for many years, in various dispensations of grace and
providence; according to the riches of his goodness, and
forbearance, and long-suffering. We have been undergoing a
vicissitude of his judicial and merciful procedure, his frowning
and favourable

ways;

*Micah vi. 2.
ways; deserved strokes, and unmerited deliverances. He has been smiting other nations,—by terrible earthquakes, inundations, and tempests; and yet sparing us. He hath sent upon us the evil arrows of famine; and also granted some relief.—But we would not, we will not be reformed by these things.

We are encompassed with, and particularly involved in dreadful commotions of a bloody war; the course whereof, on our part, has been disastrous and threatening: And therein the Lord of hosts has been evidently fighting against us. We are plagued with all the miseries of war, in our possessions and colonies abroad; we are threatened with desolating terrors of a bloody sword, to be brought in upon us at home: And the wisdom of the wise men has been perishing, the men of might have not found their hands; we have been left to the woful guidance of a profligate and selfish spirit, with sad animosities and divisions.—Yet the Lord is still giving us a space to repent: He is continuing the loud calls of his word and providence,—to return from our evil ways; that our ruins may not be multiplied, according to the multitude of our iniquities.

But we are giving a deaf ear to these calls: And, with regard to the present state of matters, we behave as a people of no understanding.—Various ways have been fallen upon, to account for the disastrous situation of public affairs; without tracing the same to the proper source. Some lay the blame upon men in public administration or command: While others charge it upon the luxurious effeminacy of the age; without deriving this from any deeper, any blacker source,—than an excess of trade and wealth. And as to the famine wherewith these lands have been greatly afflicted, the general complaint runs only against dealers in the necessaries of life.—Therefore, concerning all that is so advanced on these subjects; the Lord is saying; I hearkened, and heard, but they spake not aright: No man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? Every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle*.

*Jer. viii. 6.
The Lord’s hand is not regarded, in his judicial dispensations: The just causes of his wrath, in such prevailing corruptions as have been mentioned, with the participation of all and every one in the general guilt,—are not acknowledged, or attended unto. The most part are justifying their abominations, and refusing to be ashamed. The Lord is not turned unto, when he smiteth us: There is no humiliation under his mighty hand; but, when he calls to mourning, behold joy and gladness*; levity and lewd diversions are as rampant as ever. We are not returning to the Lord, and resting upon his arm, for defence against our cruel Popish enemies: But, holding fast our abominations, we trust in an arm of flesh; in military or naval preparations and forces, with foreign allies. And the threatening appearances of his taking the field against us, as about to execute great vengeance upon us, are made no account of.—Thus it is that the generation hath sunk into carnal security, amidst all our provocations and plagues; being stupidly impenitent, obdured, and incorrigible.

**Article II.**  
*The dismal prospect of our Condition.*

And the Lord is most evidently proclaiming,—Shall I not visit for these things? shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this†?—It is not for us to know the times or the seasons of his future proceedings; whether the day of our visitation be just at hand,—at a small or a further distance. When he is to arise against the house of the evil-doers, and against the help of them that work iniquity; he and he only is wise,—as to the time and way of bringing the threatened evil‡. But there are peculiar, and very dismal signs, in the present conjuncture,—which give reason to fear that the Lord is coming out of his place, to punish the inhabitants of these lands for their iniquity; that the day of our visitation cometh, and hasteth greatly||.

There are public scenes of divine judgments in this world; when the Lord pleads his controversy with Churches

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*Isa. xxii. 12, 13.    † Jer. ix. 9.    ‡ Isa. xxxi. 2.

Churches and Nations, as such: And the threatenings of his word are a standing rule of such procedure, as to the substance of the thing; whatever variations take place in the circumstances of his judicial work. According to that rule,—a people whom he hath eminently known, acknowledged, favoured; this is a people whom he will as eminently punish for their iniquities*,—when they have deeply corrupted themselves, and will not be reformed. But our very singular privileges have issued in a very singular height of corruptions and incorrigibleness; such as hath formerly been the prelude of threatened and desolating judgments on a land. And how shall we escape, if we go on still in our trespasses? We have the same God to deal with; who still has the same resentment of sin, and whose threatenings against it are continued in full force: as he is invariably faithful and strong, to execute his word. Therein he still says, about such a people,—To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: Behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it.—Behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts; because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it†. And even when he gives a comfortable prospect that he will turn again, that he will have compassion upon us; he also says,—Notwithstanding the land shall be desolate, because of them that dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings‡.

And, as matters are situated,—the promises, as well as the threatenings of the Lord’s word, have a dreadful aspect upon the bulk of this generation: Because they are like to prove so much rubbish, in the way of the promised rebuilding of Zion in these lands.—It is a thing certain and infallible, according to his promises, that Antichristian Babylon is to be finally thrown down; for introducing a more glorious state of the Church on earth. The Lord Christ hath such an appearance to make, in this latter period,—that the man of sin, the Antichristian state shall be consumed with the spirit of his mouth, and destroyed with the brightness of his coming||. Whatever

*Amos iii. 2. † Jer. vi. 10, 19. ‡ Micah vii. 13, 19.

|| 2 Thess. ii. 8.
use he may make of Antichristian powers, as a scourge to these and other Protestant countries,—because of their degeneracy and corruption; it is certain that the indignation shall cease, and his anger in their destruction*,—the destruction of Antichrist and his abettors. We have no reason to be afraid of any Popish confederacy; as if it could prevail unto a rooting out of the Protestant interest, or a continual bearing of it down: For the Lord will certainly bring about a glorious revival of that interest and Reformation in the Churches, upon the ruin of all such confederacy,—and of all the confederates who shall not come out of Babylon.

And we have good reason to hope, that the Lord will not altogether forsake these sinful lands; but that he will give a revival to his work therein,—to our Covenanted-Reformation. We are not now living within the period which was assigned to the rise and enlargement of Antichrist’s kingdom; but in that latter period which determines him to a gradual, and at length finished downfall. And it is not in this period, that our Lord will relinquish the conquests which he hath made from Antichrist; but will restore and enlarge the same.—We may therefore expect, in a quiet dependence upon his promises,—that he will build up Zion in these lands, and appear in his glory†: That our Covenanted-Reformation will be revived and advanced; all the infamy and ignominy which it now lies under, quite removed; and every mountain, every hill of opposition thereto, made low.

But what a striking alternative must this bring upon the generation? Either they must give place to him, by repentance and reformation,—or they must be crushed under his chariot-wheels, when he returns for the salvation of Zion.—No establishment of public corruptions, no countenance given thereto, no force or credit which they are in,—can make them stand out in his way, when he cometh; no human power or interest can secure them: Away they must go; either by a voluntary quitting of them on our part, or by a violent purging of them out on his part: And it will be easy with him to make such a riddance.—But if this should be a violent work, with

*Isa. x. 25 † Psal. cii. 13,—16.
regard to the bulk of the generation, what a dreadful work must it be? What a dreadful breaking down and plucking up, melting and consumption must there be, in the midst of all these lands? considering how deeply the general corruptions are rooted, how extensively they are spread, how much they are interwoven with the constitution and secular interests of the public body; and how much the generation must thus be involved in the destruction of their evil works.

If, therefore, we shall hold fast our multiplied abominations,—if we will not, by repentance and reformation, give glory to the Lord our God before he cause darkness*; and if the Lord Christ will yet return to his house in these lands: He must come,—treading down the people in his anger, and making them drunk in his fury, and bringing down their strength to the earth†. The revival of his work must, in this case, be introduced by terrible things in righteousness‡,—terrible unhinings and overturnings, as to the public state of matters; yea by bringing the besom of destruction upon a wicked people, for sweeping them away as filth and rubbish: Though he will not make a full end, in the day of his anger||.

And how tremendous is the voice of his word,—as it respects a corrupt generation in the church, if they prove desperately impenitent? He is saying,—The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of man shall be bowed down; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness. O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger,—I will send him against a hypocritical nation; and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Now will I shortly pour out my fury upon thee, and accomplish mine anger upon thee: And I will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense thee for all thine abominations;—and ye shall know that I am the Lord that smiteth. All the sinners of my people shall die

* Jer. xiii. 16. † Isa. lxiii. 6. ‡ Psal. lxv. 5.
|| Jer. iv. 27. v. 10, 18.
die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us.——Yet he adds, In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins; and I will build it, as in the days of old*.

HEAD III.

The great Duty of the present Generation in these Lands, pointed out and declared.

Wherefore,—from a regard to the glory of God, and from a desire that our Lord’s kingdom may be advanced; as also, from a concern about both the temporal and everlasting welfare of the present generation in Britain and Ireland, of our Kings and Princes, our rulers and fellow-subjects of all sorts,—and of their posterity: The members of this Synod do earnestly beseech and obtest them, all of them into whose hands this present Warning shall come,—as they would aim at these valuable ends, and would escape the heavy judgments which are impending;—

I. To take with the just and heinous grounds of the Lord’s controversy, the many causes of his wrath against us; particularly in what concerns the doctrine, worship, government, and discipline of his house.—We are hitherto saying, that we have not sinned; our public corruptions, which are obstinately maintained, are impudently justified: So that the Lord has a great controversy with us,—not only for our sins, but likewise about what these sins are. And, in this controversy, he must carry the day: We will not be always suffered to call evil good, and good evil,—to put darkness for light, and light for darkness†; but he will bring forth judgment unto truth‡. He will at length have our corruptions effectually discovered,—these grounds of his contending with us put out of question, as to what they are; and all pleas in behalf thereof confounded. Our lands must, one way or other, become a valley of decision, as to this matter: A confession of our mighty sins, if it be not offer-


† Isa. v. 20. ‡ Isa. xlii. 8.
Period III.  

A Solemn Warning.  

ed through his grace, must be extorted by his judgments. It is therefore, in a high degree, our duty, our wisdom, our interest,—to stoop before him; to acknowledge those iniquities which testify against us, tracing up our calamities to that source. The Lord is graciously requiring that we should thus remember our ways, and be ashamed,—ashamed of our iniquities, even of our most fashionable corruptions; that he may not deliver us to trouble and astonishment*.

II. To lay our great wickedness, in all the part and circumstances thereof, to heart,—with deep humiliation before the Lord. He is still saying to persons of all ranks, even the highest,—Humble yourselves: Turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil†. When a prophet was sent to the great city Nineveh, with a threatening of deserved judgment,—the people of Nineveh believed God‡; though the message came by an obscure person, a stranger and foreigner, who did not work any miracle for confirming his mission. But their own consciences were instead of many miracles, of a thousand witnesses,—for testifying about their iniquities, as what deserved the threatened ruin: Wherefore they humbled themselves, both king and people, in a general and solemn fasting before the Lord. And more especially must we do so,—if we would have him to turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not.

III. To set about public reformation, the restoring of the Lord’s ruined and buried work,—all concurring in their proper stations; agreeably to the solemn engagements which we came under in the loins of our fathers. Our Covenanted-Reformation,—the Presbyterial standards of doctrine, worship, government, and discipline in the Church,—must be raised up; if we would enjoy the Lord’s merciful return to us. The rebuilding of his house, in these lands, must be in a way of purging out

*Ezek. xvi. 61.  xliii. 10.  2 Chron. xxix. 8.
† Jer. xiii. 18.  Joel ii. 12, 13. ‡ Jonah iii. 5,—9.
the manifold errors, corruptions, and human inventions which
now prevail; and of going back to the rule of his own word,—
upon which these standards are founded, and with which they
agree. Thus it is that we ought to comply with his gracious
order and call: *Go and proclaim these words toward the
north, and say, Return thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord,
and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you; for I am
merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever*. —

—Alas! How little probability is there of our taking this
course? How many stumbling blocks are there, of error,
prejudice, and carnal interest,—which lie as impassible
mountains in the way? But the promised outpouring of the
Holy Spirit, which we ought to cry for, will be sufficient for
leveling and removing all these. And if this be not mercifully
brought about, we have reason to fear that the Lord will
*consume the stumbling-blocks with the wicked†*.  

IV. To endeavour personal Reformation,—as to all the
irreligion and debauchery, all the hypocrisy and lukewarmness
in the matters of God, which have overspread the three lands.
If there be not an amendment of these evil ways, in the first
place,—there can be no hope, as to our setting about public
Reformation; if persons of all sorts be not awakened to *search
and try their ways and turn again to the Lord‡*, in their
particular stations.—We are indeed come to a most
melancholy pass, in this respect: Our personal wickedness, on
all hands, is very great; a flood of profaneness is carrying
away the most part of all ranks: Yea, the generality are living,
they are even employing themselves about the matter of the
Lord’s present contendings with us,—as if they had nothing to
do with the God of heaven. And what must be the event of all
this, if reclaiming mercy prevent not? The Lord may soon
give a dreadful commission to the instruments of his wrath
against us; saying,—*Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is
ripe; come, get you down for the press is full, the fats overflow,
for their wickedness is great||*. Yet he is still saying to us,—

*Repent, and*


*Jer. iii. 12. † Zeph. i. 3. ‡ Lam. iii. 40. || Joel iii. 13.
turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin*. V. To do the work of God, in believing on the name of his Son Jesus Christ†; flying to the great atonement for sin in his blood, submitting to his everlasting righteousness, and embracing the whole of his salvation: Without doing which, we are but infidels in disguise.—The principal ground of the Lord’s controversy with this generation, and the great spring of all their other evils,—is their rejecting Christ, in the gospel of his grace; whereby they are endeavouring to banish him away from themselves, and from their posterity. Neither can matters take any hopeful turn among us, in the concerns of personal or public Reformation; but as we shall be determined to pay homage to the great God our Saviour, by a true and lively faith. And if this come not to be the case, a tremendous pleading of his quarrel must ensue; especially the quarrel of his despised gospel, and of the rejected mysteries of Christianity.—But the call of his gospel is continued; a call to the kings and judges of the earth, as well as the meaner people: Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little; blessed are all they that put their trust in him‡. Amidst all the ruins of a woful day, his children shall have a place of refuge||. Such as hearken unto him in the obedience of faith, shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil**. This is the chief method of preparing to meet our God††. And he is saying to his people,—Seek ye the Lord, seek righteousness, seek meekness; it may be ye shall be hid, shall have even outward preservation and safety, in the day of the Lord’s anger‡‡: They shall have hiding under heaven, when he has more use for them here; and in heaven, to be ever with the Lord||, when their course is finished.

And the great besom of death either in its common or extraordinary motions, will soon have us all swept away:

*Ezek. xviii. 30. † John vi. 29, 1 John iii. 23 ‡ Psal. ii. || Prov. Xiv.26. **Prov. i. 33. †† †† Amos iv. 12. ‡‡ Zeph. ii. 3. || || 1 Thess. iv. 17.
In the view whereof, men should have the care of their immortal souls lying much at heart. *The redemption of their soul is precious*: And what egregious folly must it be, to neglect the great concerns of an eternal state,—for the sake of vain pleasures, enjoyments, or amusements? all which, after the flight of a few years at most, will be as if they had never been. *Neither is there salvation in any other, beside our Lord Jesus Christ; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, by which we must be saved*. All our hope, for eternity,—is in the way of receiving and resting upon him alone for salvation, as he is freely offered to us in the gospel: And therein he still proclaims,—*Him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out*.

N.B. The Warning was concluded with an Exhortation to all who might look into it, and particularly to all under the Synod’s inspection; to pour out earnest and incessant supplications before the Lord,—in a suitableness to the state of that time, and the warning which had been given.

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Progression VII. Concerning proposed Addresses to the KING.

Step I. Concerning an Address to the KING about Religion.

A Motion was laid before the Associate Synod, by a Reverend Father, at their meeting in April 1759,—with a paper of reasons for the same; that the Synod would take under their serious consideration the following question, viz. “If it is called for duty, to lay before the King our grievances concerning the present state of religion in these lands; together with a dutiful and suitable petition, for redress of the same?”

This paper having been twice read, at the meeting above-mentioned; a particular consideration of it was deferred, till the ensuing meeting in October the same year. At this meeting, the said paper was again read; and some reasoning ensued concerning it, with prayer by

*Psal. xlix. 8. † Acts iv. 12 ‡ John vi. 37.*
Period III. Of a Religious Address to the King.

a brother for light and direction: “Whereupon the Synod agreed, without a vote, to lay aside, as they did and hereby do lay aside any farther consideration of the said motion, in their present circumstances.” ——The same motion was further urged, with the concurrence of another minister; at the meeting of Synod in April and August 1760, as also in April and August 1761: The door being left open, from time to time,—for producing what farther reasons might be offered in support of the motion. But, at the meeting last mentioned,—“after some considerable time spent in conference, with prayer; the Synod agreed, without a vote, in adhering to their former resolution of laying aside the motion:” Since which time, there has been no further insisting upon that subject.

When this affair was under the Synod’s consideration, in October 1759; one of the ministers (as is observed in the minutes) “read a paper as his speech,—containing answers to the reasons for the motion, with several reasons against it.” And as all the members present (except the proposer of the motion) admitted of these answers and reasons; so far as to sustain the force of them in general, without any particular objections: It may be presumed here, to give the following account of them*.

Section I. Extracts from the Answers to the Reasons for the Motion; containing the substance of those Reasons.

I. According to the happy freedom of the Government under which we live, all the subjects have a right to petition the Sovereign for a redress of their grievances: So that no question can take place about the competency of such a step; whatever question there might be about the necessity or expediency of it, in any particular circumstances.—But what is it, in this case, that could be properly meant by our grievances? Nothing certainly, in the nature of the thing, but our own sufferings under

*A few members of a particular congregation, who were dissatisfied with the Synod’s laying aside the motion,—having somehow obtained a copy of the paper concerning it, got the same published after the Author’s death: And then, at the desire of some brethren, the opposite paper now referred to was also published, in December 1762.
under any wrongs or injuries. And it is a matter of thankfulness, that we have so little to say upon this head; so little occasion to petition for a redress of our grievances, though we had the greatest encouragement to do so.

II. There will be no question among us, that the present state of religion in these lands is very dismal: That public defections and corruptions, as to the state of religion, are come to a very dreadful height,—that the Lord’s work is lying in ruins; and that he has a very deep controversy to plead with persons of all ranks, on this account.—Nor will there be any question among us, that it is the duty of all ranks to return unto the Lord; in setting about the revival of our Covenanted Reformation, according to their several places and capacities.

But, according to any proper sense of the expression, or any sense in which it was ever before used,—can these public evils be brought under the private character of our grievances? Can a Reformation thereof be called a thing due to us, as a redress of our grievances? Can we arrogate any distinguished property in such public reformation, that it might be petitioned for as a piece of justice to us?

We ought to sign and cry for public and prevailing abominations: But we may not arrogate that what men owe to God and their own consciences, about the purging of these abominations,—is a thing which they owe to us, as a redress of our grievances.—Whenever we should hear of any profane and illegal usages taking place in any cities of Britain and Ireland, or in any families that we have no inspection of; we might as well take upon us to call these things our grievances: And might go to claim a reformation of them from the magistrates of these cities, or the masters of these families; as a thing which is due to us, a redress of our grievances.

Thus, the competency of petitioning the Sovereign for a redress of our grievances,—says nothing at all to the competency of such a step as is now proposed to be taken: It is a step which ought to be considered in a quite different light, from that of petitioning for a redress of our grievances.

III. We have no account of the Lord’s prophets under the Old Testament, their ever going to deal particularly
with the rulers; except when they had a particular, immediate, and extraordinary mission from the Lord to do so,—or were some way called upon by these rulers. They dealt with the rulers, in the way of delivering a message to them from the Lord; but never in a way of representation and petition about the Lord’s work: And the rulers whom they dealt with, were formally of the same religious body with themselves; in a state of immediate church communion with them, and among the acknowledged objects of their ministry.—When all this is considered, these examples of the prophets will have no appearance of making any thing to the present purpose.

IV. As to the case of Jonah, he made no particular address to the King of Nineveh or his nobles; he applied to none of them: He had no instructions for doing so. He walked up to his instructions, in a general and public warning; of which word came unto the King of Nineveh and his nobles. It was then the Lord’s time for awakening; and then the public general warning did prove sufficient.—But if it had been otherways; if that public general warning had not reached the King and his nobles,—or, when reaching them, had not been regarded by them: Yet Jonah’s ministry was fulfilled, in that matter. He had not next to make a trial of what might be obtained, by addressing or petitioning the King and his council: And so, Jonah’s case has nothing of argument for the present affair; but the contrary.

The Reverend Synod have been essaying to cry aloud, and not to spare,—to lift up their voice like a trumpet, giving a certain sound; in the late Solemn Warning. That public warnings are generally disregarded, quite neglected and despised by the bulk in these lands,—is indeed a dismal evidence, that the Lord’s time is not yet come for awakening the generation. But no sort of evidence is yet given, of the step now proposed being a proper method to follow out what has been done that way; of its being competent for this Synod, practicable by them, or what the Lord is calling them to: And we can have no reason to look for the Lord’s blessing on any mean, to any good end; till once we be satisfied that it is a proper mean, of the Lord’s prescribing.

V. The
V. The ruling powers in church and state, at the time of the *Solemn League and Covenant*, were on the side of reformation; endeavouring to promote it, according to their places and callings. At the same time, there was a malignant party, who managed an underhand and violent opposition to Reformation-work; endeavouring to make factions and parties among the people, and trying to withdraw them from their Covenant-conjunction,—by secret combinations, persuasions, or terrors. And the people engaged not to suffer themselves to be so withdrawn: But when they found themselves attacked by any secret opposition,—or found any lets or impediments thus laid in their way, which they were not able themselves to suppress or overcome; they were to reveal these secret or underhand courses of malignants, making the same known to such as had both a power and professed inclination to prevent or remove the same;—for, in the nature of the thing, none other could be the objects to whom these matters were to be revealed or made known.

But is there any parallel, any resemblance between this and the case now under consideration? Not a case that is versant about any opposition *made to us* in our profession, which we have to suppress or overcome: Not a case in which any *secrets*,—any secret factions, combinations or conspiracies; are to be revealed or made known: Not a case of *concurring* with the ruling powers, about Reformation; but of *contending* against them.

VI. We testify against the General Assembly in the year 1690; for their sitting down upon the civil establishment of religion at the Revolution, *without remonstrating* against what was defective in the same.—But what the General Assembly had then to remonstrate against, was properly *their own grievance*; an establishment of religion *imposed upon themselves*, which they were required to accept of and acquiesce in. Besides, they were otherwise in a state of immediate and actual intercourse with the civil powers,—to whom they should have remonstrated: They even had the King present among them, by his Commissioner; and had the King to address however, on that occasion.—Let any similarity once appear in our case, and the question might soon be ended.

VII. If
VII. If our case with respect to civil rulers, were any way like that of the prophets with respect to the builders of the second temple; all the present difficulty would be solved: That is,—if we had any such providential intercourse with the civil powers, as the prophets had with the builders; and if we had the civil powers to excite and encourage to a proceeding in Reformation-work, as being only dilatory or discouraged about it.—But seeing matters are far otherwise at present, we should be concerned to wait upon the Lord till his time for building Zion; without supposing that he has any thing for us to do, out of our place: Without presuming upon his countenance, in essaying any instrumentality for the revival of our Covenanted-reformation, beyond our sphere; or beyond what he providentially opens a door for.

Section II.  

The Reasons against the Motion*.

The step now proposed for being taken by the Reverend Synod turns out, as is apprehended, to be unwarrantable; impracticable, unseasonable, improper, irregular, unscriptural, and impatient.

Reason I.  

Unwarrantableness.

The step now proposed seems to be unwarrantable.—In any management concerning the Lord’s work, it is a very momentous and tender point to be satisfied about our warrant from him; that any thing proposed to be done is particularly and presently our duty, in its being the Lord’s will that we should do so. All extremes in this matter, are sinful and dangerous. There is much need to guard against Jonah’s example of backwardness, in shifting the Lord’s call; but there is no less need to guard against Peter’s example of rashness, in going before it. What a sad misgiving must there be, at length, even in the best aims,—where persons proceed upon no other warrant but what lies in their own zeal!

And

*The Reasons are here given entire, (with an additional distinction under proper titles); bearing no other alteration of language, than what belongs to a change from speaking in the first person,—in some few places where that occurred.
And it is not the weight, importance, or necessity of any errand,—that can afford a sufficient warrant for going upon it; there must be something else to determine our duty, that we may not run unsent. No good can ever be expected to come of any presumptuous course, even about the best work; in taking upon us beyond what the Lord puts upon us. When Isaiah heard the Lord saying—Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? he answered, Here am I; he put himself at the Lord’s will, to be disposed of in that matter: But he did not immediately undertake to go,—he did not suppose that the importance or necessity of the errand contained any warrant for him in particular to go; he saw it needful to have a more definite warrant,—while he said Send me. John the Baptist could not but know from his infancy, what great work he was raised up for; considering what took place about his conception and circumcision: Yet he spent about thirty years of his life in solitude; without supposing that he had any warrant for actually putting hand, even to the great and necessary work which he knew himself designed for,—till once the word of the Lord came unto him in the wilderness.

And where shall we find a warrant to us, for what is now proposed? It is not supposed that we are to seek it in any such immediate call, as Isaiah or John the Baptist got: But where else may be find it? Mens natural birthright contains a warrant to petition for the redress of their own personal grievances, wherever they have access to do so; but this cannot touch the present case. Again, the step now proposed cannot be pretended to lie within the ordinary course or compass of our ministry: For, though the office of the gospel ministry is primarily related to the whole church; yet, ever since the days of inspiration, it is essential to the exercise of this ministry,—that it cannot be extended to any but those who have subjected themselves to the same.

And where next can we expect to find a warrant, for what is now proposed? No where else can it be found,—but in our getting some such particular opportunity and access for that work in the course of providence, as might be a particular evidence of the Lord’s putting the work into
into our hands. Even John the Baptist, notwithstanding his extraordinary mission otherwise,—saw need of such a providential warrant for the freedom which he used, in another case, with Herod. His fame had reached Herod, who called him to be sometimes at court; so as to have particular intercourse with him. And, as is observed by the great Witsius,—the reason of his using such freedom with Herod, notwithstanding the visible hazard of doing so, was; that divine providence had procured him such access to Herod.

And John saw need of this providential warrant, in that matter. For though there were other princes then in Judea, who, no doubt, needed a like freedom to be used with them about various corruptions; yet, as he had no such access to them, he did not particularly meddle with any of them: He particularly meddled with none but those who came to him, or called for him; or whom he was someway brought into an immediate and particular intercourse with. But it cannot be pretended that we have any such providential warrant, in the present case.

**Reason II. Impracticableness.**

The step now proposed seems to be impracticable.——If we abstract from the case of inspirations, and miraculous dispensations; it cannot be supposed that the Lord is calling to a present going forward in any step, where he sees not meet to open a door for it in his providence,—so as to render it practicable. Paul gave this reason of his tarrying at Ephesus,—*For a great door and effectual is opened unto me;* and he gave the same reason for his preaching at Troas,—*A door was opened unto me of the Lord:* And there is certainly as much need of an open door to us, for any new management about the Lord’s work; in order to its being constituted our present duty. No step of our duty can regularly proceed, upon an expectation of any thing like miracles to be wrought for us: We are called to act rationally in every matter; not as fools, but as wise. And let it be considered how the case stands, as to the matter now before us.

We cannot formally present any address or petition to the King, without getting some great personage to introduce us. But though this were done, and a favourable audience
Of a Religious Address to the King. Period III.

audience got,—yet the difficulty would not be over: For all that could be expected of the King, according to the nature of the business, is,—to recommend us by a message to the houses of Parliament, in our going to address them; and we could have no access to them, but by a method of address which is inconsistent with our principles,—taking in the title of Lords Spiritual. But, though this could be dispensed with,—yet there is no access to lay a petition before either house of Parliament, without getting a member of the house to introduce it.

When such is the case, it may be thought even ridiculous to suppose that these bars could be surmounted by us; in the present state of matters. And how can we think that the Lord is calling us to any work, that must depend on a ridiculous supposition as to the practicableness of it? What he calls to, he paves a way for: But he seems to have much yet to do, as to the leveling of mountains in the way,—before we can have such work to do as is presently under consideration.

Reason III. Unseasonableness.

The step now proposed seems to be unseasonable.—Not to insist upon any appearance of its being unseasonable, at present, with respect to the civil powers; though this point is not without some difficulty: It may only be observed, in general,—that the matter which is meant to be addressed and petitioned for, comprehends a great overturning of parliamentary deeds and constitutions; a very great overturning as to the whole established state of religion in these lands. And one may well doubt if the civil powers, though they were inclined for it, could be supposed capable of such a work,—in the present state of the generation; and especially in the midst of the present war.

But what is properly meant here, as to the step proposed, is the appearance of its being unseasonable with respect to ourselves,—considering what is our present situation. We are a very small remnant, of no secular influence, objects of a general prejudice and contempt; who have no direct or immediate intercourse with the civil powers: And who, in our religious capacity, have
no intercourse with them at all; noway known or acknowledged by them, in that capacity. And whatever we may think of ourselves, or whatever the generation ought to think of us,—yet in fact, we are unto them a hated and despised sectary: So that, according to any rational view, an address and petition from us, such as is now moved for, would come to be considered in the same ridiculous or seditious light,—as if any of the sectaries, through Britain or Ireland, were petitioning the government to espouse and establish their principles. But it seems evident that our addressing and petitioning, under these disadvantages, (beside all the probable vanity of the attempt),—would be an exposing instead of promoting the Lord’s cause.

It is supposed that no history, sacred or profane, can afford an instance of any who owned the Lord’s cause, and in such a situation,—ever offering to intrude themselves in that manner, upon the civil government under which they lived; or reckoning it seasonable for them to make any attempt of that sort, in such circumstances. And while matters continue with us as at present, can we rationally suppose,—that our time is come for making any such appearance as is now proposed? or that the designs of the Lord’s providence are yet come to a ripeness, for making any such use of us?—The Lord will, in his own time and way, restore the credit of his work; and of all who favour the dust of Zion. But, in the mean time, we ought not to repine or fret at the disadvantages of our present situation; we should study a patient bearing of Christ’s reproach in this matter,—without any struggle for getting out from under it, till the Lord’s time. And we may expect that when he shall have any work for us, in a way of dealing with the civil powers,—he will bring our situation to a further maturity for it than yet appears.

**Reason IV. Impropriety.**

The step now proposed seems to be improper; or to be a mean which is noway fit, in its general nature, for gaining the end.—The end proposed, is a revival of our covenanted Reformation through these lands: Not in the way of getting the rulers to concur with the desires of
the people, who generally have no such desires; but in the way of getting rulers and people awakened, convinced of public evils, instructed about the Lord’s cause, and so reclaimed from their prevailing corruptions. More generally,—the end proposed is a work of conversion to the Lord, personal and public, among all ranks of persons in these lands.

Now, the Lord has various means for gaining this end, fit means in the dispensations of his word and providence, and in public warnings agreeable thereto: All which will prove effectual means, when his time comes for blessing them. But the question is,—If a formal address and petition to the rulers, or to any body, can be reckoned a proper mean for such an end? It is supposed that petitioning, humble petitioning, was never looked upon as an instituted mean of conversion; as a mean to which the Lord has given any appointment or promise for that end. And as to any body, high or low, King or subjects; it seems very absurd to imagine that their changing of their religious principles and profession, or their returning to the Lord and his way,—can ever properly come in as an answer to any body’s petition.

Reason V. Irregularity.

The step now proposed seems to be irregular; in respect of aiming at a disorderly way of Reformation, not agreeable to the rule of the Lord’s word. In the Declaration and Defence of our principles about the present civil government, we have made this observation*; “That, in Scotland, the Reformation of the church hath always (in a beautiful order) preceded and introduced the reformation of the state:” And we have there laid down the following principle†, viz. That “it is the duty of the Lord’s people to adhere unto the standard of a public Testimony against defections and corruptions, civil and ecclesiastical: And to observe the divine order in working reformation; so as every one may, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, study personal and family reformation; and at the same time may seek after reformation of the church,

“according

“according to the word of God and our Covenants,—as introductory unto reformation in the State; which likewise will natively introduce reformation in places of public power and judgment.” But the motion now before the Reverend Synod seems to be for inverting and overturning all this, which is laid down as the divine order of reformation; by attempting to have it begun in the state, in places of public power and judgment: As if we might make a push for reformation in this new order; because the Lord has not yet seen meet to bless our essays for it in the other order, with more success. It is used as an argument for the present motion,—That the generation have neither will, nor the proper power, to set about public reformation; and that warnings given them are quite neglected and despised, by the bulk of these lands: As if therefore we should directly apply to the King and other rulers, for their supplying all that defect by their authority and power. But such an argument seems to make directly against the motion: Unless we should ascribe to the civil magistrate an Erastian sort of power,—to chuse people’s religion for them; and impose it upon them, whether they will or not. Besides, in a free country, where only the true religion can thrive,—this way of reformation cannot be supposed practicable by the civil magistrate, though it were competent to him. And as our rulers claim no power but what comes from the people, it can never be properly used against the body of the people; however good, in itself, the end might be for which it were so used. If then we would judge what the rulers have a power to do, in public matters,—we must judge of it from what the body of the people are justly disposed to have done. And one may look on all the magisterial ways of civil power and authority—as being none of God’s ordinances for reclaiming a backsliding generation; from a course of prevailing errors and corruptions, about the matter of revealed religion.

The Prophet hath said, in the name of the Lord; Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers,—until the spirit be poured upon us from on high. When the Lord’s time comes for such an outpouring of his Spirit, to revive his work in the Church,—among the
body of the generation; this may sweetly introduce proper
managements about religion in the state: But all attempts for it
in any other order, must be both vain and preposterous.

Reason VI. Unscripturalness.

The step now proposed seems to be unscriptural; or to
have no countenance from any precepts or examples of the
Lord’s word.—The scripture enjoins us to obey the civil
powers in all things lawful; to honour them, to pay them
tribute: And to pray for them; that we may lead a quiet and
peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty. But no precept
appears to be in the scripture, for any other or higher sphere of
duty toward them; in the case of such as have providentially no
immediate communication with them. Moreover, that nothing
in the behaviour of the Prophets under the Old Testament can
bear out the present motion,—has been already shewed. And
it appears to have no sort of countenance from the practice of
our Lord’s Apostles, under the New Testament.

If there could be a time for any such application to civil
powers as is now proposed, it would seem to have been in the
first period of the gospel; when Apostles were employed to
fight against the fashionable corruptions of the world, in
propagating the Christian religion: Men who had an universal
commission for that end, were privileged with supernatural
assistance and infallible conduct in the matter; and who were
endued with a power of working miracles,—by which their
authority could easily be documented to earthly powers,
where-ever needful. But, in all the course of their ministry,
they made no such application to these powers: They never
called in the assistance of the secular arm, against the
prevailing abominations; whatever advantages they had for
doing so, from the universality of their commission, and the
miraculous powers with which it was accompanied. Our Lord
did not see meet to make choice of that secular way, for
promoting the interests of his kingdom.

It cannot be said, that we have any more of a providential
intercourse with civil powers than the Apostles had; or even
near so much as some of them. And Christian

magistrates
magistrates can have no more need of being dealt with about the true religion, than Heathen magistrates had: Nor can ordinary ministers have a further warrant to deal with the one sort, than Apostles had to deal with the other. At the same time, though our Solemn Covenants are a superadded obligation to the duties previously incumbent from the Lord’s word,—yet they cannot be taken as a foundation of any new duties; or as conferring upon us any rights and privileges in religious matters—beyond what Apostles could claim, or presumed to use.

Our Lord said to his Apostles, before they were sent abroad upon their work.—Ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them: Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. But no direction was given to them, nor left to any after them,—for an ultroneous going before kings and rulers on Christ’s behalf: Nor had they any promise of his countenance in doing so; it behoved them to wait till they were providentially brought before these higher powers. And though our Lord made this declaration concerning Paul,—He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before kings; yet the Apostle never presumed, upon the credit of this, to go before any kings;—he waited till he was providentially brought before them: And even then, the testimony which he gave against them for Christ,—was not to go, nor ever went, beyond the line of that modesty and humility which did lie in answering for himself.

If we then, instead of being brought before the King and rulers, are to go before them on Christ’s behalf; not to answer or seek justice for ourselves,—but to take upon us with them, before they give us any access or opportunity to do so: We would need a better warrant for this method of procedure—than one can yet make any guess of, from scripture or reason.

Reason VII. Impatience.

The step now proposed seems to be impatient; or not agreeable to that meek and patient waiting for the Lord,—which is our duty.

We
We have much of the Lord’s goodness to acknowledge, in what he has done for his work among the hands of this Synod; amidst all the grievous things of our time: *His going forth is prepared as the morning*; and it is a great mercy, that the morning of some revival to his work is so far advanced with us. At the same time, whatever storms of his wrath may intervene; we have ground to look out for a noon-day brightness of his appearing, to raise up the *fallen tabernacle of David.*—But *he that believeth shall not make haste:* We should not make haste to any instrumentality in the work; farther than as the Lord comes gradually forward, in his providence, to give us employment.

All the dealing that our ancestors ever had with the civil powers, about the state of religion, in the former periods of Reformation,—was what they were always most natively shut up or led out unto, in the course of providence; as they had to plead for their own liberties, against Popish and slavish impositions upon themselves,—or were called upon to be advised with. But nothing of this kind yet appears in our case. If the Lord should have nothing to do with us all our days,—in a way of dealing with the civil powers, about the public state of religion; we ought patiently to acquiesce: And to satisfy ourselves with aiming at faithfulness, within the sphere of our ordinary ministry. But if the Lord shall have any such work for us, we may suppose that he will prepare our way for it; without leaving us to cut out or force a way for ourselves. We know not how soon the Lord may bring matters to such an issue: When he shall see meet, in the course of his judgments and mercies, to awaken the generation for considering their ways; and to dispose the higher powers for entertaining, if not for seeking advice upon the subject. Then may our way be paved, for dealing with them about the Lord’s work; without being liable to the *great objections,* and to the *heavy or ridiculous constructions,*—that must evidently strike against any such attempt in the present circumstances. Till then, our duty seems to be laid out in this direction; *Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.*

Step
Step II. Concerning a Loyal Address to the King, upon his Accession to the Throne.

At the first meeting of the Associate Synod after the accession of GEORGE III, they had an Overture before them,—for presenting a dutiful and loyal Address, on that occasion: And, after some reasoning, they came to the following resolution upon that subject, viz.

Edinburgh; April 16th, 1761.

The Associate Synod having an overture transmitted to them from the Associate Presbytery of Glasgow, as also from the Associate Presbytery in Ireland,—for making a dutiful and loyal Address to the King, on his accession to the throne; they spent some time in conferring upon this subject. And though it is manifest, by many public and unquestionable evidences,—that the Testimony in which they are engaged, and which they reckon themselves obliged to maintain, against the defections and corruptions of this period both in church and state,—has been all along accompanied with a sincere and stedfast loyalty to the civil government; in a zealous opposition to Jacobitish, and all other principles of rebellion or disaffection: Yet they think it proper to take the present opportunity to declare, as they do hereby heartily agree in declaring,—That they can yield to none of their fellow-subjects, in prizing the civil government under which they live, as the best-modelled government throughout the known world; in respect to the memory of our late Sovereign King GEORGE II,—as one of the best of Kings, of the mildest administration, who ruled over us as the common father of his people; in thankfulness for the peaceable accession of our present Sovereign King George III, to the throne of these kingdoms; in rejoicing at the auspicious beginning of his reign; in a firm resolution to support and live dutifully under his government, in our several stations and capacities,—according to the word of God, and our received and known principles founded thereon, to which we are bound by Solemn Covenant; in an inviolable attachment to the Protestant succession, in the illustrious family of Hanover;—and in a full
full purpose still to maintain these principles, among the
people under their inspection. But the Synod find themselves
obliged to drop the foresaid Overture: Because they have no
view of obtaining a proper introduction to the King, with such
an Address; and because the designation which they bear, in
their united capacity, has not been taken knowledge of by their
civil superiors,—so as they might expect that it could be
admitted, in an Address to the throne.

CONCLUSION.

A Display has now been made of the Secession-Testimony,—
in the RISE of it, as occasioned by the corruptions and tyranny
of the Established Church: in the STATE of it, as formed by
the Associate Presbytery: And in the MAINTENANCE of it
hitherto, by the Associate Synod.—This Testimony has been
stated and maintained, on behalf of our Covenanted
Reformation; against the grievous deformation which has been
long taking place in the church-state: And likewise against
those corruptions in the civil state which particularly affect the
interests of religion, and of the Reformation once attained to.
But it is a singular beauty of this Testimony; that first the
Associate Presbytery, and afterwards the Associate Synod,
have been providentially led to manage the same,—with a
formal contending against extremes on all hands, relating to
the civil government under which they live.

The Associate Presbytery was shut up, as hath been
explained in the first Volume of this Display,—to a particular
contending against what is called the Anti-government Scheme:
A scheme which proceeds upon as glaring contradiction to,
and as gross perversion of the express and plain dictates of the
Holy Ghost in Scripture,—as can be charged upon any Heresy
that ever broke out within the Christian Church; and which,
under an appearance of great zeal for our Covenanted
Reformation, and for the testimony of our martyrs in the
persecuting reigns,—doth
cast
cast a most false and infamous reproach upon the same, by pretending a conformity thereof to that scheme.

The Associate Synod has maintained the same opposition to the said scheme;—even proceeding against it by the highest censure of the church; as also requiring a solemn engagement against it, by all who are admitted to any church-office in their communion*: And they had occasion to make a most explicit declaration of their loyalty to the present civil government, particularly against the principles of that scheme,—not only in a consistency with, but as a part of the Testimony among their hands; by their Resolution above expressed, concerning an address to the throne,—upon the accession of George III. At the same time, while thus contending against that extreme,—for a due acknowledgment of the present civil authority over these nations, and subjection thereunto in lawful commands; they have also had an occasion, as before represented, to contend against an opposite extreme,—or against an undue acknowledgment of civil authority, in the matter of religious grievances.

Yea, the Princes of the Brunswick-line have no surer friends in this island, none of a more inviolable attachment to the protestant succession in their family,—than the ministers of the Associate Synod, and the people under their inspection. Their secession from the established Church, on account of her corruptions and tyranny,—and their dissatisfaction with many evils of the present government, relating to the interests of religion and of the Reformation once attained to; their circumstances and principles in these matters have not the remotest tendency, to breed in their minds the smallest degree of disaffection to that government.

And it helps to strengthen their attachment to the reigning family, that the principles by which the same is established on the throne are a safe-guard to them,—against the persecuting spirit which has appeared in some corrupt church-men; the same that wrought effectually in the Scottish Curates, under the persecuting reigns: And which, they may suppose, would be as effectual now,—for having their blood shed like water; were it not,

*p. 79, 114.
not, that the present government is founded on the burial of persecuting principles.

The Schism-Overture, which made so much noise about eight years ago, did represent the Secession as an “alarming evil; which hath so threatening an aspect—to the peace of the country.” Accordingly, some church-men have not scrupled to declaim against them, in the General Assembly,—as a people dangerous to the government: Yea, to represent them, with great virulence,—as a people watching in readiness for an opportunity to rise against the government; like a quantity of gun-powder, ready to be blown up by the first spark.

But how did they improve the opportunity which they had, in the year 1745?—Then, as now, the Seceders were spread through all the Lowlands of Scotland; from Dunkeld to Cheviot, from St Andrews to Air: And in the counties of Angus, Mearns, Banff, Elgin, Nairn and Ross. Yet not one of them in all Scotland, even in places where the rebels had the greatest power and influence,—could ever be got to join, or to show any favour to the designs of that party. All of them, men and women, took all opportunities to manifest their abhorrence of the Rebellion: As they took all opportunities to join in public prayer and fasting for the suppression of it; while all the Seceding ministers were this way employed in their congregations, during the course of the Rebellion,—with express supplications in behalf of our Sovereign King GEORGE, and his government. At Edinburgh and Glasgow, where they had opportunities to do so,—they applied for and got arms from the servants of the Crown, for assisting in the public defence against the rebels; in which cause, some of them lost their lives. And so much was their loyalty then depended upon,—that some Seceders, recommended to him by the Writer of this account*, were singled out by the Lord Justice-Clerk; as proper persons to be employed in secret services for the government.

Such

*This Writer, though but on a level with his brethren as to principles and zeal in behalf of the reigning Family,—had se-
Such was the effectual demonstration in so critical a juncture, that Seceders gave of their loyalty; while they looked upon every thing valuable to them in this world, as embarked on the same bottom with the Protestant succession in the Family of Hanover: And therefore it may well be thought strange,—that any should have presumed to attack them, before the General Assembly, as a people disaffected to the Government. But they have to acknowledge, with thankfulness, that justice was openly done to them on this head by some honourable members of the Court,—particularly by the Lord President of the Session; who repelled the injurious reflections cast upon them, in the matter of loyalty to the Government.

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veral distinguished opportunities of practising the same. While the Rebels were in possession of Edinburgh, he met with his congregation about three miles westward; and, on the first occasion of doing so, he spoke to them as follows, viz. “Our not assembling in our ordinary place, appears warranted in point of duty: That thus we may give an open testimony, proof and document,—that we are resolved, through the Lord’s grace, to come to no terms with the enemy that has power in the city; but to look on them as enemies, shewing ourselves to be none of their confederacy. In our public capacity, it is fit that we make even a voluntary removal from the place where they are, as from the seat of robbers; shewing ourselves resolved that their seat shall not be ours.”

[N.B. The Rebels expressed a fondness, that worshipping congregations might then assemble in and about Edinburgh as formerly; under an assurance of meeting with no disturbance: Thus consulting their own reputation, as if Presbyterians could be safe enough under their shadow.] And upon returning to the ordinary place of worship at the city, when the Rebels had departed for England; he spoke to them as follows, viz. “Our very meetings elsewhere, during the time that the antichristian and malignant party now in arms had their seat here,—have been an open and necessary testimony against them; and of our purposing no confederacy with them, nor putting any confidence in them.”

Moreover, twice on each of five Sabbaths that he preached westward from the city in the open fields,—he prayed in express terms for our Sovereign King GEORGE and his Government; and for the suppression of the rebellion,—expressly under the character of an unnatural and Antichristian Rebellion, headed by a Popish Pretender: Though when doing so, he several times had parties of Rebels who understood English (from one of their guards near the place of worship) standing before his face, at the outside of the multitude; with signs of great displeasure, and at one time (when he read out an act of the Associate Synod for a public Fast, bearing an express call to pray in such terms
And they have never aimed at any reward of their loyalty,—beside the great blessing of liberty and protection, in common with all other peaceable subjects. At the same time voluntarily excluding themselves by their principles, from even the lowest favours of any civil office or employment; while they have not freedom, on religious accounts only, to take the oaths which are necessary to qualify persons for the same.

And after all let the impartial world judge, what should be given to the false tongue,—that could represent Seceders as a people waiting in readiness, for an opportunity to rise against the Government. None of their fellowSubjects have given better evidence of a genuine disposition,—to Render unto CAESAR the things which be Caesar’s and unto GOD the things which be God’s.

as above related) with threatening language,—though they were restrained from using any violence.

But no account should have been now given of what is above, from any regard to the Writer; or otherwise than as a specimen of the spirit which universally prevailed among Seceders, on that occasion: While the attacks which have lately been made upon their character (and particularly leveled against him) in this matter,—make the whole representation now given, to lie above all reasonable imputation of vanity.

And it may be further observed, that the Reverend Mr Moncrieff of Culfargie, beside a robbery which they committed upon him,—had his son and heir lying for a time in prison among the Rebels at Perth, with threatenings against his life in case of any attempt to rescue him; for his persisting in a refusal to pay the cess to their leader.

APPEN.
APPENDIX I.

A VINDICATION of the Judicial Testimony, upon the Head of the Revolution and Union Settlements of Religion*.

The Seventh Article of the Libel against the Separating Brethren—referreth to several attacks made, by some of them, upon the Judicial Testimony; as a (pretended) discovery of mistakes and falsehoods, in the enumeration of public evils there made: Some particular notice of which has been taken, in several notes upon that article. And these attacks are now to be repelled. As,

I. In the Judicial Testimony, concerning the Act of Settlement at the Revolution, as to Presbyterian church-government and discipline,—the very act itself in this matter, even beside other concomitant procedure, is testified against, as making a retrograde motion; whereby all the legal securities given to this church, in that covenanting period betwixt 1638 and 1650, are overlooked and passed by.

Now, what sort of course is taken for obscuring and explaining away this point of Testimony,—as there expressed? it is just a pitiful attempt of defaming the said covenanting period, by telling us,—that “though there were several legal securities given to the church” in that period, “which the Revolution-settlement sinfully neglected and passed over; yet the settlement of church-government, particularly, had never any other legal security,” after the act 1592,—“and therefore the Revolution-parliament behoved to look back” thereto, in establishing the Presbyterian government.—But did not legal securities to the church, imply legal securities to church-government.

The Parliament (by Act 4. 1640) ratified an Act of Assembly, ordaining that Episcopal government be holden unlawful in this kirk; being not warranted by the word of God: As also, the civil places and power of kirkmen; being incompatible with their spiritual function. And (by Act 5. 1640) they ratified an Act of Assembly, ordaining the subscription of the National Covenant, as then renewed,—with a particular abjuration of the government of the kirk

*This Vindication is taken from the Introduction to the proceedings of the Associate Synod, upon the case of their Separating Brethren,—in the years 1747 and 1748; with little variation.
kirk by bishops, and the civil places and power of kirkmen; as unlawful within this kirk, upon the reasons and grounds contained in the Acts of the General Assembly. And (by Act 6. 1640) they rescinded all laws in favours of the civil places and power of kirkmen: Upon consideration of the Commissioners of the late General Assembly their craving, in behalf of the Church, the rescission of these laws; as prejudicial to her liberties, and incompatible with her spiritual nature. And (by Act 5. 1644) they ratified the League and Covenant, with the act of Assembly authorising the same: In which League and Covenant, after swearing an engagement for endeavouring the preservation of the reformed religion in the Church of Scotland in—government,—and the reformation of religion in the kingdoms of England and Ireland in—government, according to the word of God; there follows an abjuration of Prelacy. And (by Act 15. 1649) they added to the King’s coronation-oath, a swearing “his allowance of the National Covenant, and of the Solemn League and Covenant,—and obligation to prosecute the ends thereof in his station and calling: And that he shall, for himself and his successors, consent and agree to Acts of Parliament injoining the Solemn League and Covenant, and fully establishing Presbyterian Church-government,—as they are approven by the General Assembly of this Kirk and Parliament of this kingdom; in all his Majesty’s dominions.” And (by Act 16. 1649) they ratified the act of Assembly—approving the Westminster Confession of Faith: In which act of Assembly it is declared, that (even without the Magistrate’s consent, after humble remonstrance to him) it is free to assemble together synodically (even in General Assemblies), as well pro re nata as at the ordinary times, upon delegation from the Churches,—by the intrinsical power received from Christ; as often as it is necessary for the good of the Church so to assemble. And (by Act 26. 1649) they did “Statute and ordain, that no person that is malignant, and disaffected to the present work of Reformation and Covenants,—shall hereafter be—employed in any place of public power and trust within this kingdom.” And (by Act 39. 1649) they did break the yoke of Patronages, as a Popish custom that hath no warrant in God’s word; which yoke was bound on by the Act 1592.—And was all this, not to mention other things; no legal security to the settlement of Church-government!

II. In direct opposition to the Judicial Testimony, it is taught,—That, in the treaty of Union, “the Parliament of Scotland do not determine, whether the Church of England was Episcopal or Presbyterian; they leave it to the Parliament of England, to abolish Episcopacy and settle Presbytery, if they had a mind.” And what is the mighty reason given for this? It is that the Parliament of Scotland “leave it to the Parliament of England,
“England, to settle the government of the Church there as they shall think expedient.” But the thing left them was, to provide for the security of the Church of England,—as they shall think expedient: And did not every body know,—that by the Church of England, was meant the Episcopal Church of England then taking place? Yea (as is observed in the Testimony), did not the Commission of the General Assembly then remonstrate against that clause in the Act of Ratification,—as containing a stipulation or consent for the establishment of the hierarchy and ceremonies, in England?

III. There are yet broader attacks made against the Judicial Testimony, on the head of the Revolution.

As is well expressed in that Testimony,—“This Church and land having groaned under the yoke of arbitrary government, and a hot persecution, for the space of about twenty-eight years; the Lord was graciously pleased to break the yoke from off our necks, by a glorious and surprising appearance for us at the Revolution, in the latter end of the year 1688; whereof the Prince of Orange was the happy instrument, who was afterwards proclaimed King,—to the joy and satisfaction of all such as had a just sense of the worth and value of their liberties, religious and civil: Wherefore this Presbytery judge it their duty to commemorate with thankfulness the divine power and goodness manifested in his wonderful work, whereby all the three nations were rescued from Popery and slavery.” Moreover, in the said Testimony, a sad misimprovement of that glorious and surprising appearance is complained of and witnessed against: And as Mr Wilson observes [Def. p. 316.]; “If the Lord shall enter into judgment with us, on account of the misimprovement of the deliverance given us in the year 1688, and for our manifold defections and backslidings from him since that time,—a furnace seven times hotter than the former may yet be set up in Scotland.” But, in direct opposition to the Testimony against that misimprovement, some strange things are now advanced. And,

1st. We are told that “the National Covenant, as it was sworn to and explained in 1638, and also the Solemn League and Covenant,—are, by express acts of the Revolution-parliament, vindicated from the indignities done to them in the preceding reigns:” And for proof of this we are generally referred to Acts 27 and 28, 1690. Now, among various acts of the preceding reigns, rescinded by these Revolution-acts,—there were indeed three, relating particularly to the foresaid Covenants, [viz. Act 5. Charles II. Parl. 1. Sess. 2. and Act 3. Sess. 3.]; which ordained every person entering into a place of public trust, on pain of being reputed and punished as an usurper of his Majesty’s authority,—to sign and subscribe a Declaration,

bearing
bearing that the foresaid Covenants were and are in themselves unlawful oaths: As also [Act 5. James VII. Parl. I. Sess. 1.] which declared, “That the giving or taking the National Covenant as explained in the year 1638, or of the League and Covenant (so commonly called), or writing in defence thereof, or owning them as lawful or obligatory upon themselves or others,—shall infer the crime and pains of treason.”

But after all, there were sundry other preceding acts against these Covenants:—Particularly, beside some others, there was [Act 7. Charles II. Parl. I. Sess. 1.]; whereby all the subjects were discharged “to require the renewing or swearing of the—League and Covenant, or of any other Covenants,—concerning the government of the Church,—without his Majesty's special warrant and approbation; and—to renew and swear the same, without his Majesty’s warrant,—as they will be answerable at their highest peril:” And likewise [Act 2. Charles II. Parl. I. Sess. 2.]; whereby this position, That it is lawful to subjects, upon pretence of Reformation, or other pretence whatsoever, to enter into leagues and covenants,—is declared rebellious and treasonable; and it is further declared, that the National Covenant as renewed in the foregoing period, with the Solemn League and Covenant, were and are in themselves unlawful oaths,—and that there did lie no obligation upon any of the subjects from the said oaths, or either of them, to endeavour any change or alteration of (the then) government, either in Church or State; which act also did annul all acts and constitutions, ecclesiastical or civil, approving of these Covenants;—and likewise declared the Assembly 1638 to have been an unlawful and seditious meeting; and that all their proceedings were in themselves from the beginning, are now, and in all time coming, to be reputed unlawful, void and null,—and that all foregoing ratifications thereof should from henceforth be void and null; yea, the whole foregoing progress of Reformation was thereby declared to have been unlawful and seditious: And all this beside the other Act rescissory, in the foregoing Session of that Parliament; whereby all the Parliaments betwixt 1640 and 1648, (as having been actuated by madness and delusion, and unfit to be any longer upon record) are rescinded and annulled, with all their proceedings,—so as the whole should be held in everlasting oblivion.

These, then, were terrible acts against our Solemn Covenants; whereby they suffered awful indignities: Though (according to what Mr Wodrow observes, Vol. I. p. 24. and 25.) it was not till a little afterwards, that the Parliament ordained persons in public trust to subscribe the Declaration,—renouncing these Covenants as in themselves unlawful; and not till some years afterwards, that an adherence unto them was declared high treason. But the foresaid terrible acts against our Covenants, doing them such
Appendix I. A Defence of the Judicial Testimony.

such awful indignities,—were not by an express act or any otherwise, rescinded at the Revolution: Only that then, by rescinding after-acts,—persons in public trust were indeed relieved from an obligation to renounce these Covenants as in themselves unlawful, on pain of being punished as usurpers of his Majesty's authority; and the subjects relieved from an immediate liableness to be destroyed as traitors, for owning them. Again,

2dly, We are further taught,—that "the Revolution-parliament do assert and avouch the alone Headship of our Lord Christ over his church, the intrinsic power of the church, and the divine right of Presbytery:"

Which doctrine is directly eversive of the Judicial Testimony; while therein the General Assembly at the Revolution, [who did not assert (or acknowledge by any formal Act) the alone Headship of our Lord Christ over his church, the intrinsic power of the church, or the divine right of Presbytery],—is witnessed against as keeping measures with the state, in their several Acts and deeds at that juncture.

But now, what particular or direct proof is offered, for the above novelties of doctrine? Why, we are referred to the 5th Act of the second Session of Parliament at the Revolution,—as rescinding the Act [James VI, Parl. 21. Chap. 1.] ratifying the Acts of Assembly 1610: Which pretended Assembly, amidst a mass of corrupt proceedings about the introduction of prelacy, had interwoven this expression concerning the General Assembly, viz. "The indiction whereof the Assembly acknowledgeth to appertain to his Majesty, by the prerogative of his royal crown." Again, we are referred to the Act [Parl. 1. Sess. 2. April 25, 1690], rescinding the Act anent the supremacy 1669: Which Act of supremacy had attributed unto the King such a blasphemous prerogative concerning the external government of the Church, with all ecclesiastical meetings and matters to be proposed and determined therein,—that whatever Acts, orders and constitutions he should think fit to publish concerning these, were to be observed and obeyed by all his Majesty's subjects: And this blasphemous Act was rescinded, just upon consideration of the Estates of the kingdom having declared, in their grievances,—that it is inconsistent with (not the establishment of Church-government, in general, but) the establishment of the church-government now desired, and ought to be abrogate. But in all this Act, or in the foresaid rescissory clause of the other Act,—there is not one syllable of our Lord Christ, nor his Headship, nor his alone Headship, nor the intrinsic power of the church, nor the divine right of Presbytery: Though yet we are taught therefrom to reckon,—that the Revolution-parliament did assert and avouch the alone Headship of our Lord Christ over his church, the intrinsic power of the Church, and the divine right of Presbytery. However,

3dly,
3dly, For supplying any defect of the foregoing particular proofs, with respect to the above strange points which are now advanced in contradiction to the Testimony; a general system of proof is brought up, viz. the Act 27th 1690, rescinding the laws for conformity; Act 28th 1690, as rescinding the Anniversary Act,—with some profane and bloody laws toward the close of the persecution; the authorising our Confession of Faith and books of discipline, by Act 5th 1690: But especially two general clauses of this last Act, viz. “Their Majesties, with advice and consent of the said Three Estates, do hereby revive, ratify and perpetually confirm all laws, statutes and Acts of Parliament, made against Popery and Papists; and for the maintenance and preservation of the true reformed Protestant religion, and for the true church of Christ within this kingdom,—in so far as they confirm the same, or are made in favours thereof:”

And afterwards, upon a particular rescinding of sundry Acts, it follows,—“with all other Acts, laws, statutes, ordinances and proclamations; and that in so far allenarly as the said Acts and others, generally and particularly above-mentioned,—are contrary or prejudicial to, inconsistent with, or derogatory from the Protestant religion and Presbyterian government now established:”——With all which there is taken in another clause, from the preamble of that Act, viz. “Conceiving it to be their bound duty, after the great deliverance that God hath lately wrought for this church and kingdom; in the first place, to settle and secure therein the true Protestant religion, according to the truth of God’s word,—as it hath of a long time been professed within this land.”

And this new body of evidence is reckoned so far more than sufficient, for compleating the proof of the former points advanced against the Testimony; that from this, along with the foregoing proofs, further doctrines, eversive of the said Testimony, come to be inferred,—even to an astonishing height: The amount whereof is,—That “the Revolution-parliament cannot justly be charged with omissions, as to the settlement of the true religion; the true religion, as it was professed and sworn to in the second Reformation-period from 1638 to 1649, in opposition to the indignities done to it in the preceding reigns,—was espoused and professed by the Revolution-parliament; which does, either more generally, or more formally and expressly, rescind all the wicked laws that were made against any part of the true religion that was professed in that period, as well as the former,—and ratifies all the good laws that ever were made in favours of it since the Reformation.”

We have now before us, a strange height of contradiction to the Judicial Testimony,—on the head of the Revolution; together with the substance and strength of what is adduced for support-
ing such contradiction: And though there be not opportunity here, of such enlargement as might readily fall in on this subject; yet the following observations thereupon are proposed. And,

1. What is now taught concerning Act 5th (or the Act of settlement) 1690,—as if thereby the Covenanted Reformation betwixt 1638 and 1649 had been revived! in opposition to the indignities done thereto under the persecuting reigns! by ratifying all the good laws which had ever been made in favours of the true religion, as it was professed and sworn to in that second period of Reformation! and by rescinding all wicked laws to the contrary!——This might well be reckoned strange doctrine, were it for no more than these things, viz.

Though the Parliaments themselves, in that second Reformation-period, had been afterwards rescinded and annulled; so as not to be any longer upon record, but held in everlasting oblivion: Yet there was not one syllable, in any Acts at the Revolution, of restoring these Parliaments; so as their Acts might become capable of ratification. Again, the foresaid Act 1690 doth particularly rescind some deforming laws which had been already rescinded in the said Reformation-period; without ever considering them as having become already dead and buried in that period. Further, though the settlement of Presbytery by the Act 1592 had been afterwards revived; with further Reformation upon that head, in the said second period: Yet the said Act was returned to, in the Revolution-settlement; without one syllable about that after revival and further Reformation. Also, in reviving the Act 1592, at the Revolution, the clause thereof binding on the yoke of patronages—is excepted; to be thereafter taken into consideration; without any regard unto the said yoke having been already broken, anno 1649; as a Popish custom, that hath no warrant in God’s word. Likewise, when this Act 5th 1690 comes forward to a particular rescinding some laws in the persecuting reign of Charles II; it entirely overleaps all the laws of the first Session of his first Parliament, wherein the late Solemn Covenants and Covenanted Reformation—had been awfully overthrown: And as it begins with rescinding the first Act of the second Session of the same Parliament, so it again overleaps the very next, or the second Act of that Session; though this was the terrible Act rescissory, whereof some particular account has been already given.

And likewise, the Revolution-parliament came afterwards to rescind several wicked laws concerning religion in the persecuting reigns,—beside those which had been specified in the Act of settlement; (while also the Act anent religion and the test, which the Act of settlement had expressly rescinded in so far, came to be further rescinded by Act 28th 1690): But when afterwards they particularly rescind these other wicked laws, it is without the least hint of any salvo about the general clause rescissory in the

foregoing
foregoing Act of settlement; though in another case (Act 28), where a clause is brought in as comprehending a part and but a part of the preceeding general,—they bring it in with saying, and but prejudice of this generality. Wherefore, as the general clause rescissory in the Act of settlement could enervate no former laws, farther than as they should be found inconsistent with the settlement otherwise made in that Act; so it must be very unaccountable to suppose, that the said general clause was intended to remain effectual,—against any wicked laws concerning religion in the persecuting reigns, which came not afterwards to be otherwise rescinded.

And so, in an index and abridgement of the Scots laws, for two or three hundred years back,—carried on till some years after the Revolution, by Sir James Stuart the King’s advocate; (which book, of common use among those who deal in law matters, has undergone more than one edition; and is printed with a privilege by the Lords of Privy Council,—without any censure, as if it were any way injurious to the present law or government): Though the several laws, both before and after our second Reformation-period, be there condescended upon,—as to what they import and when they were made, with the several rescindings and revivings which any of them had afterwards undergone;—yet both the Parliament and laws of that Reformation-period, which came to be annulled at the Restoration, are there passed in silence as if they had never been; further than that the infamous Acts rescissory, overthrowing these Parliaments and laws with the whole work of Reformation in that Covenanting period, are there laid down in the same way as any other standing laws,—without any insinuation of their having been either formally or materially rescinded at the Revolution.

And Mr Wodrow, in the first volume of his history published about 28 years ago, when speaking of the wicked Act rescissory anno 1662; he says, [p. 118. and 119.]—“They declare it a treasonable position and seditious, That it is lawful for subjects to enter into leagues and covenants for Reformation: This declaration runs so flatly in the face of Scripture, reason, and the approven practice of many,—that it is a shame and reproach that it stands in the body of our Scots laws; and casts a slur upon our excellent Reformation from Popery, which upon the matter is here declared to have been seditious and treasonable.”—Wherefore it must appear very odd to tell us now, and to bring in the Act of settlement for the chief proof of it; as if the Covenanted Reformation betwixt 1638 and 1649 had been revived at the Revolution, in opposition to the indignities done thereto under the persecuting reigns!

Moreover, if it indeed held, as is now taught,—that all the good laws which were made in favours of the true religion in that reforming
reforming period, as it was then professed and sworn to,—were ratified at the Revolution; this behoved to comprehend a ratifying of the following laws, among others, *viz. Act 5th 1640, anent the Ratification of the Covenant,* as it was renewed in that period; which doth “ordain and command the said Covenant to be subscribed by all his Majesty’s subjects; and also ordain the famen to be presented at the entry of every Parliament, and before they proceed to any other act—that the same be publicly read, and sworn by the whole Members of Parliament claiming voice therein—otherwise the refusers to subscribe and swear the same shall have no place or voice in Parliament.” Also *Act 5th,* 1644; which approves and confirms the League and Covenant, *together with the Acts of the Kirk and Estate authorising the same.* Likewise *Act 15th* 1649; which ordains, that before the King be admitted to the exercise of his royal power,—“he shall assure and declare by his solemn oath, under his hand and seal, his allowance of the National Covenant, and obligation to prosecute the ends thereof in his station and calling: and that he shall consent and agree to Acts of Parliament injoining the Solemn League and Covenant, in all his Majesty’s dominions.” And also, *Act 26th,* 1649; which doth “statute and ordain, that no person that is malignant and disaffected to the present work of Reformation and Covenants, and against whom there is just cause of exception or just ground of jealousy because of their disaffection,—shall hereafter be—employed in any place of public power and trust within this kingdom:—And it is statute and ordained, That if—after—being—employed in places of power and trust, they shall make defection to the malignancy,—this their malignancy—being proved against them, shall be a sufficient cause to the Parliament of this kingdom, or any having power from them for that effect, to—remove or suspend these persons from the places of power and trust.”

Now, though indeed none of the above Acts either could or ever pretended to make such religious qualifications essential to the nature and validity of civil offices and power; while they only contained limitations for the more suitable and profitable exercise thereof,—by those who had authority to make and maintain such limitations: Yet seeing the authors of the new doctrine about the Revolution, are not come the length of denying that these were laws in favours of the true religion,—as professed and sworn to in our second Reformation-period; what they are now advancing (as if all the good laws then made in favours of the true religion as then professed and sworn to, had been ratified at the Revolution), must therefore import,—that particularly *these laws were revived,* and so returned to their effect, at the Revolution. And shall any think, that they can get the world persuaded
persuaded of such absurd fancies? Or can the new doctrine which is advanced on this head, be of any better comparison than unto the extravagancies of a dream; running directly cross to the most palpable reality and truth of things? However,

2. This extravagant notion, [That all the good laws which had ever been made in favour of the true religion, as it was professed and sworn to in our second period of Reformation, were ratified,—and that all bad laws to the contrary were rescinded; at the Revolution]: This is now taught with great confidence, especially from the foresaid general clauses in the Act of Settlement.

And here it may be first observed,—that it is but an empty affair, to triumph about this new interpretation of these general clauses; upon the maxim of generals including particulars: Seeing that new interpretation of these clauses is refused, not just because they are general,—but because they are otherwise so laid and circumstated, as that they cannot admit of any such interpretation.

In the next place, It behoved to be a very loose and absurd way of dealing with such general clauses in an Act of Parliament,—to receive them as comprehending all that we could mean by the words thereof, abstractly taken: When the only proper reception of them must be, according to what we have reason to conclude the Parliament means by them; as they are laid and circumstated.

Accordingly, the new way of explaining these general clauses is so very absurd and awful; that it equally serves for justifying the parliamentary procedure about religion,—amidst all apostasy and persecution that had ever taken place in Scotland, since the reformation from Popery. For as general Acts cannot, in the nature of the thing, be any worse than general clauses,—in favour of the true religion; so, under all the said apostasy and persecution that had formerly taken place, there still were general Acts passed about the true religion,—of as fair and favourable a strain, in themselves, as any general clauses at the Revolution. Thus, in the year 1600,—after King and Parliament had made considerable progress in apostasy, as to the introducing of Prelacy; yet they passed the following Act, viz. “Our Sovereign Lord, with advice of the Estates of this present Parliament, ratifies, approves, and confirms the liberty of the true and holy Kirk,—and religion presently professed within this realm, and established by the laws of the same; and all Acts, Constitutions and Immunities, made and granted to the same,—as well in his Highness’s minority, as since his perfect age: And ordains the same to be put to execution in all points, against all persons whatsoever; in all time coming.” Again, in the year 1633,—when the apostasy of that period was come to a much greater height,
height, and still a-carrying on; another Act was passed, as follows, *viz.*
“Our Sovereign Lord, with advice and consent of the Estates, ratifies
and approves all and whatsoever Acts and Statutes made before; anent
the liberty and freedom of the true Kirk of God, and religion presently
professed within this realm; and ordains the same to stand in full force
and effect, as if they were specially mentioned.”

Moreover, during the late period of horrible apostasy and
persecution, two similar Acts took place.—Toward the end of the reign
of *Charles II anno* 1681, which was one of the hottest years of the
persecution,—a general Act was passed; ratifying and approving “all
and whatsoever Laws, Acts, and Statutes,” made by King *James VI* and
King *Charles I* (in whose time both our former periods of Reformation
had taken place), “for settling and securing the liberty and freedom of
the true Kirk of God, and the Protestant religion presently professed
within this realm.” Yea, in the year 1685, which was another of the
hottest years of the persecution,—when the Duke of *York*, a professed
Papist, had come to the throne; an Act was made of the tenor following,
*viz.* “Our Sovereign Lord, with consent of his Estates in Parliament
convened, ratifies and confirms all the Acts and Statutes formerly
passed,—for the security, liberty and freedom of the true Church of
God, and the Protestant religion presently professed within this
kingdom; in their whole strength and tenor, as if they were here
particularly set down and expressed.”

Now, considering the very wide and fair terms in which these
Acts were laid,—as plausible, in themselves, as any general clauses at
the Revolution: If the witnesses for Reformation had then fallen upon
the new way of explaining such *generals,*—by considering them
abstractly, according to all that they themselves could have meant by
such fair words; how might they hereupon have gone to work? Why,
even during the greatest height of the apostasy and heat of the
persecution, they might have reasoned as follows, *viz.* “Whatever
wrong courses the Parliament has lately been taking, yet they are turned
right now; all is going right, and tight, and well with them *now:* They
have now come to approve, ratify and confirm the good laws, acts and
statutes formerly made; for the security, liberty and freedom of the true
Kirk of God, the true and holy Kirk,—and the Protestant religion, the
true religion, presently professed in this realm: And it is not only some
of these good laws, or such of them as had been left unrescinded, that
they now ratify and confirm; but it is all of them; all and whatsoever
such good laws, acts and statutes, about the true kirk and true
religion,—as have been formerly passed since the first dawning of the
Reformation from Popery;—and they are all now ratified, in

“their
“their whole strength and tenor, as if they were particularly set down and expressed: And thus the true religion, as it was professed and sworn to in our Reformation-periods, is now again espoused and professed by the Parliament;—as they now, either more generally or particularly, do strongly ratify all the good laws that ever were made in favours of it since the Reformation; whereby all the bad laws that have ever been made to the contrary, are consequently overthrown!”—But the witnesses for Reformation, in those days, were not left to dream themselves out of their Testimony; or to prostitute conscience and common sense unto the chime of sounds and syllables, by falling into such fanciful reasonings.

What therefore was the fairest view they could reasonably take of such general acts, or what was the best notion of them that could then occur to the thinking world? Why, they just behoved to reckon, concerning such general Acts, let the language of them be as fair as words could make it,—that yet they really amounted to no more, than a general ratifying of such former laws about the church and religion as might quadrate with the particular settlement which was otherwise taking place at the time.

Just so, if we consider the general clauses in the act of settlement at the Revolution, according to any common sense; we must conclude, that they really amounted unto no more, with respect to any former laws about the church and religion,—than a general reviving and ratifying of such as should be found agreeable, and rescinding of such as should be found disagreeable, unto the particular settlement which was otherwise made by the said Revolution-act. But the particular settlement made by that Act, was in a way of utter silence about the Reformation-period betwixt 1638 and 1649; as if such a period had never been; as also in a way of going directly by, and leaving untouched, all the acts of the first Session of Parliament at the Restoration,—with the second Act of the next Session of the same Parliament; whereby the Covenanted Reformation of the said period had been razed. And so the particular settlement of this Revolution-act, was evidently made to stand in a consistency with the burial of that Covenanted Reformation by those Acts rescissory: Wherefore it must be very odd to suppose, that the general clauses in this Act of Settlement could contradict the particular settlement therein; by making real opposition to these Acts rescissory, in favours of the said Reformation-period. And indeed to teach, that the work of Reformation betwixt 1638 and 1649, which was undeniably left buried in the particular settlement of this Revolution-act, could yet find any revival in the general clauses thereof whereby that particular settlement was fenced,—is a scheme of such glaring absurdity, as scarce needs to be exposed. And, 3. It
3. It is quite vain to pretend, that this new fancy, as if our late Covenanted Reformation had been revived by the Revolution-settlement,—can derive any real countenance from the above-mentioned clause in the Preamble of the Act of Settlement; or from the authorising of our Westminster Confession by the same Act. For the expression in that clause, about settling the true Protestant religion as it hath of a long time been professed within this land,—can bear no such improvement: Considering that the Protestant Religion had been some way professed in this land (though very differently at different times), all along since the Reformation from Popery;—and considering also, that the said expression is so general and indefinite,—as to abstract from any distinction of times since the first Reformation, with respect to the said profession; so that it evidently abstracts from every thing in the profession of the Protestant religion, but what was common unto all these times.

And as little can be inferred, in the present case, from the authorising of our Westminster Confession by the Act of Settlement. For, in that Act, the said Confession begins to be mentioned in a way of overlooking any special designation that it had under the late Covenanting Period,—but by this new designation, viz. the Confession of Faith now read in their presence. Again, the expression of ratifying it as the public and avowed Confession of this Church, is so abstract and indefinite; that even though it had been designed to look farther back than the Church-diffusive of Presbyterians, then come out of the furnace of persecution,—who were then beginning to recover and be acknowledged in a national Church-state: Yet still no particular account is made of the Act of Assembly 1647, adopting the said Confession; and there is no account at all made of the necessary limitation and explication wherewith it was adopted by that Act,—nor of the ratification thereof by the Parliament 1649, according to the said Act of Assembly;—and it is now ratified, in a way of abstracting from the bygone reforming consideration thereof, as a covenanted point of uniformity in the three kingdoms. Yea this Act of Settlement, in the ratifying of that Confession,—doth so far abstract from all consideration of any thing proper and peculiar to the Presbyterian Reforming Church of Scotland, concerning the said Confession; that it is ratified under no more particular view,—than as the public and avowed Confession of this Church, containing the sum and substance of the doctrine of the Reformed Churches. But,

4. In order to a clearer and more comprehensive view of this whole affair, let us next make a brief comparison of what has been laid down as witnessed against in the Testimony, about state-procedure at the Revolution,—with what is now advanced
to the contrary; as to the evidences on both sides: And it will be very obvious, on what side the balance falls.

(1.) What has been laid down as witnessed against in the Testimony, about state-procedure at the Revolution, depends upon immediate and direct evidences: Which are briefly as follows.——That the abolishing of Prelacy was upon consideration of its being a great and insupportable grievance to this nation, (which even a good thing can be to an ill or prejudiced nation);—and contrary to the inclination of the generality of the people ever since the Reformation, (which was a reason wholly political); they having reformed from Popery by Presbyters, (which was a ground merely occasional): And the State Act did thus abolish Prelacy, according to the PEOPLE’S claim of right; without acknowledging any old or calling for any new Church-act,—which had or might have condemned it, according to CHRIST’S claim of right in the matter. That the settlement of Presbytery was in pursuance of the Act abolishing Prelacy according to the claim of right; in the close of which Act there had been a resolution declared, to settle by law that church-government in this kingdom which is most agreeable to the inclination of the people*: And this settlement of Presbytery was in a way of reviving the former settlement thereof anno 1592†; without considering that revival of the said Act 1592, with the further Reformation concerning it, or any further legal securities to this Church,—which had afterwards taken place in the late covenanting period‡. That in the above settlement of Presbytery, some old acts were rescinded,—which had already been (and more suitably) rescinded in the said Covenanting period; without any consideration of their having been so: And the part of the Act 1592 relating to Patronages, was reserved for after consideration; without regard to its having been already made void by the Parliament 1649. That whatever be said

*The settlement of Presbytery was without expressing any scriptural consideration of it, any more particular than that of being agreeable to the word of God; which is a position that will hold about all the different forms of civil government, and all schemes of human policy concerning things of themselves indifferent,—according as any of them shall prove most expedient.

†When the Act of Settlement observes, that Presbytery, having been established by the Act 1592,—was “thereafter received by the general consent of this Nation, to be the only Government of Christ’s Church within this Kingdom;” this did plainly abstract from an acknowledging that Presbytery (as well as Presbyters) had got footing in Scotland before that time;—and it was applicable to the case of the Nation during some years after that time, till Prelacy was got introduced: But the observation of its having been thereafter received, did plainly abstract from the case of its having been thereafter revived, in the late Covenanting Period; and of its having been then received as a point of Uniformity for the three Kingdoms.

‡When the Presbyterian Church-government was indefinitely established in the hands of those Presbyterian Ministers, who had been outed since the first of January 1661; this did wave a making any account, of what defection from the late Covenanted Reformation had been taking place,—in the way of the public Resolutioners, and of the compliers with the indulgences and the toleration.
Appendix I.  A Defence of the Judicial Testimony.

said in some Revolution-acts, about reviving any former laws; yet they have never a word about reviving any former Parliaments betwixt 1640 and 1650, which had become annulled: Though it was not till the revival of these former Parliaments, that any thing they had done could come to be legally understood as belonging to the category of former laws. That those Acts of the first Session of Parliament at the Restoration, with the second Act of the second Session thereof, whereby the late Covenanted Reformation had been awfully overthrown,—were not taken notice of or culled out of any rescissory Acts or clauses at the Revolution; though some other Acts of that Restoration—parliament were so. That though some tyrannical and bloody Acts of the late reigns, which did properly look forward, striking directly against the subjects who should own or not renounce the Covenants,—were rescinded at the Revolution: Yet there had been some other wicked Acts before these, which did properly look backward,—striking directly against the Covenants themselves, as they had been solemnly entered into and prosecuted under the foregoing period, (discharging any renovation of them without his Majesty’s warrant, and afterwards declaring them in themselves unlawful oaths, and pretending to dissolve the obligation thereof; as also, declaring against that former Covenanting-work,—as if it had been seditious, rebellious and treasonable); which Acts were not taken notice of or culled out, by any rescissory Acts or clauses at the Revolution. And, in a word,—that in any Acts at the Revolution there was no mention made of the late Reformation-work, or of our Solemn Covenants; more than if such things had never been.

It is then upon such evidences as above, (which are generally expressed or implied in the Testimony, and which are otherwise very notour),—that the Testimony has these complaints of the Revolution-settlement, viz. “Prelacy is never considered as contrary to the word of God, and abjured by our Covenants; nor our Presbyterian Church-government and discipline, as what the land is bound and obliged to maintain, by the most solemn Oaths and Covenants: A retrograde motion is made, near an hundred years backward; and all the legal securities given to this Church, in that Covenanting period from 1638 to 1650, are overlooked and passed by: Likewise all the Acts of the first Session of the first Parliament of King Charles II,—together with the infamous Act rescissory, anno 1662, (whereby a Covenanted Reformation was razed, and the acts and deeds of that Covenanting Period were declared seditious and treasonable),—are left untouched in this above-mentioned settlement: The indignities done to the National and Solemn League and Covenant, and consequently to the most high God the great party in them,—are never regarded; but these solemn oaths and Co-
“venants are left buried under an Act rescissory, and other Acts and deeds subversive of them.” But,

(2.) When the new scheme is brought forth, in opposition to the Testimony on these points; is it in the way of making any candid and fair attempt to disprove such immediate and direct evidences, upon which the Testimony proceeds in this matter? By no means. Or is it in the way of producing any immediate and direct evidences for supporting the new scheme? Not at all. How then is the affair managed? How is that scheme offered to be supported? Why, it is just by a number of strained inferences and loose fetches from some Acts of Parliament; with forced and absurd glosses upon general clauses thereof.

We are roundly told, that “the Revolution-parliament do assert and avouch the alone Headship of our Lord Christ over his Church; the intrinsic power of the Church, and the divine right of Presbytery.” And without there being one syllable of such things, in any Acts at the Revolution; we are taught to infer all from an Act rescinding the Act of Supremacy 1669: And from the Act of Settlement; in its rescinding the Act [James VI. Parl. 21. chap. 1.], as also in its ratifying our Confession of Faith and books of discipline. But it is very odd, to draw any such inferences from the bare rescinding of that Act James VI,—or of the Act of Supremacy 1669; considering what has been already observed upon this matter: And considering further,—that the rescinding of these Acts was only in so far as agreeable to, or in conjunction with, the reviving of the Act 1592; by which the Assembly was still deprived of power, where the King or his Commissioners are present, to nominate and appoint time and place for their next meeting. And as to the alledged ratifying of our books of discipline (which must be meant of such a thing having been materially implied in the revived Act 1592), with the ratifying of our Confession of Faith; it is as odd to draw any such inferences from these topicks: Considering what has been already observed, about the manner of ratifying that Confession; with the manner wherein Prelacy was abolished, and our Presbyterian Church-government and discipline restored, at the Revolution: And considering further, that, according to such a general and loose way of reasoning,—the present Established Church might be called sound enough in doctrine, because they profess to retain our Westminster Confession; yea, every corrupt Church, and even gross hereticks, might be said to assert and avouch all sound doctrine,—because they profess to maintain the Bible.

Again, we are taught, that “the National Covenant, as it was sworn to and explained in 1638, and also the Solemn League and Covenant,—are, by express Acts of the Revolution-parliament, vindicated from the indignities done to them.

“in
“in the preceeding reigns.” And after all, as there is no revolution-act that makes any mention of these Covenants, or of indignities done them, or of vindicating them: So the acts we are referred to on this head, do contain nothing about it,—but a vindicating the subjects from tyranny and butchery on account of these Covenants; leaving the Covenants themselves to be considered according to other unrescinded Acts, as hath been already explained.

Moreover, it is advanced,—that “the Revolution-parliament cannot justly be charged with omissions, as to the settlement of the true religion: The true religion, as it was professed and sworn to in the second Reformation-period from 1638 to 1649, in opposition to the indignities done to it in the preceeding reigns,—was espoused and professed by the Revolution-parliament: which does, either more generally, or more formally and expressly, rescind all the wicked laws that were made against any part of the true religion that was professed in that period as well as the former,—and ratifies all the good laws that ever were made in favours of it, since the Reformation.” And what are the fine evidences produced, for supporting such high points! Why, there is first the ratifying of our Confession by the Act of Settlement; with the great doctrine about some general clauses in that Act: But how grossly unaccountable and absurd it is, to make such inferences from or put such glosses upon these things,—has been already detected. And what are afterwards adduced, is the Act 27th 1690, which rescinded the arbitrary and persecuting laws for conformity; with the Act 28th 1690, as rescinding some other profane and bloody laws toward the close of the persecution,—and rescinding the Act for a solemn anniversary thanksgiving: (the rescinding of which anniversary Act was in a way of abstracting from and waving all other or further consideration thereof, than as now either useless or found to be hurtful; so that all the real effect of this rescinding, was the people’s freedom from any legal obligation to keep the 29th of May for ever,—as an holyday to the Lord, in thanksgiving for the restoration of King Charles II). But what further, in any common reason, could the amount of these Acts belong unto,—than unto the great deliverance from arbitrary government and persecution, which the nation met with at the Revolution; and as coinciding with the overthrow of Prelacy,—according to the peculiar manner wherein Prelacy was abolished, and Presbytery restored, at that time. Thus,

(3.) After all the parade wherewith the new scheme about the Revolution has been given out, as a thing proven and demonstrated; yet there is nothing to be found in the alleged proofs and demonstrations thereof, but a huddle of such strained inferences and loose fetches from some Acts of Parliament, with such
such absurd glosses upon some general clauses of them,—as cannot
deserve any room but in *Fancy no Faith*. And are these of any moment,
for counterbalancing the immediate and direct evidences on which the
Testimony proceeds in the present case? Or can they warrant a man’s
conscience at this time of day, for shifting about and changing sides; as
to that Solemn Witnessing and Covenanting-work, which the Lord has
graciously brought forth amongst us?

The Acts of Parliament which are boasted of in this affair, do
indeed serve for proving what the Testimony never denied: As to that
glorious and surprising appearance which the Lord made *for us* at the
Revolution; in that wonderful work of delivering this nation from the
yoke of arbitrary government and a hot persecution,—whereof the late
King *William*, who acted in Scotland by his Parliament and ministry
there, was the happy instrument;—and as to the overthrow of Prelacy,
with the establishment of the Protestant religion and of Presbytery;
according to the manner which has been already explained. But what
says all this, as to the case of our making a grateful and suitable
appearance for the Lord *at that time*; in returning to the Lord and his
work, according to the due pattern of the late Covenanting-period?

It is quite off the purpose to talk here,—about how far any
obscurities, ambiguities or general terms of law, ought to be explained
in favours of the people; or about what benefit of law we might claim to
ourselves, against the civil power: For the plea now taken in hand is of
a quite other nature; as it is a pleading from some Acts of Parliament, in
favours of the civil power, and people, and this whole generation,—
against God. The matter called in question, is about us in this
generation having many ways served ourselves heirs unto the sins and
backslidings of our fathers; according to several instances that have
been mentioned in the Testimony: And so the new scheme broached in
opposition to the Testimony on that head, is properly a scheme of
rejecting these causes of the Lord’s wrath; exploding these grounds of
his controversy, and casting these articles of his indictment against this
generation. And what is there offered for supporting such a scheme, in
the present arguings about some Acts of Parliament? Is there any one
particular or definite word brought in from any of these Acts, to the
contrary of these things laid down in the Testimony? Not one. Do any
of these Acts make the least mention of the late Covenanted-
reformation, or of our Solemn Covenants, or of Prelacy as contrary to
the word of God and abjured by these Covenants, or of Presbytery as
what the land was bound by these Covenants to maintain,—more than if
such things had never been; or do they contain any one particular hint
about reversing the above-mentioned Acts rescissory, whereby the said
Reformation and Covenants had been buried,
(and which are laid out among standing laws, in our common index of laws, to this very day)? By no means. But all the scheme is built upon a confused straining of some Acts which are not to the purpose: And especially, upon such an improvement of some general clauses, as cannot consist with the nature of these Acts—in the particular settlement thereby made; and as could have served, by a just parallel, for exploding the charge of state-defection during the heat of the persecution,—according to what has been formerly observed. Moreover,

(5.) The dreadfulness of the new scheme about the Revolution comes to be vastly aggravated,—from the application which is made thereof unto the present time. The high things which have been advanced as taking place then, concerning religion and reformation,—are all brought forward as presently taking place in the same way still*; and that for defence of a present swearing of the religious clause in some burgess-oaths. Thus, however the alone Headship of Christ over his Church, the intrinsic power of the Church, and the divine right of Presbytery,—have come to be farther incroached upon since the Revolution; by the Toleration, Patronage, and Porteous Acts; as also, by sundry laws made with ecclesiastical penalties, and otherwise: Yet we are taught to believe,—that the alone Headship of Christ, the intrinsic power of the Church, and the divine right of Presbytery, are asserted and avouched; in the national settlement of religion at this very day! Again, however our solemn Covenants, our Covenant-union with England, and the whole Reformation-work of the late covenanting period,—have come to be laid under new grave-stones; by the articles of the Union-settlement, (which also “enacts and declares, that all laws and statutes in this kingdom, so far as they are contrary to or inconsistent with the terms of these articles as above mentioned, shall from and after the Union cease and become void”); as also by the Abjuration-oath, and otherwise: Yet we are taught to believe,—that the National Covenant as it was sworn to and explained in 1638, and also the Solemn League and Covenant, do yet stand vindicated from indignities; and that the true religion, as it was professed and sworn to in the second Reformation-period, does yet stand espoused, professed and ratified,—in the national settlement of religion at this very day!—And of what a lamentable tendency is all this, to withdraw the generation from a sight and sense of their apostasy; and to wrap up the causes of the Lord’s wrath against them, in a cloud of the most extravagant fancies? But,

IV. It has not sufficed to go these awful lengths which have been already considered, in running down the received Testimony: But it comes further to be all overturned and exploded by the lump; while we are told,—“That the historical facts in the

*Fancy no Faith, p. 19, 22, etc.
“Testimony, such as these relating to the Revolution, were always excepted by the Associate Judicatures from being any proper part of it, as a Testimony binding the conscience before God;—which formerly were judged no binding part of it at all.”

What then is offered for proving this odd story, as to the Associate Judicatures having ever made such an exception about the historical fact of the Testimony? Nothing but another fancy of the author’s, which is still more astonishing, viz. That “by this exception or declaration frequently, openly and judicially made, multitudes were clear to make accession and embrace the Testimony; who otherwise could not do it, because of their scruples at these historical parts of it.”

Now here is a new piece of history; which every body, who comes once to reflect upon it in a calm mood, may easily take up as carrying its destruction in its bosom: For the thing here told, about the Associate Judicatures formerly, is what their greatest enemies will scarcely believe; and the thing told, about multitudes making accession to them, is at no rate believable.

It cannot be well supposed, that any will believe what is here told concerning the Associate Judicatures formerly: As it may be well supposed, that all the world who knows any thing about them, will have so much charity for them,—as to reckon that they have been acting with something more of common honesty; than to train in multitudes to a Solemn Testimony against the generation, upon many points of historical fact,—by the bait of their being no way bound to make any conscience of it before God, whether the whole affair was true or false.

And as to what is here told, concerning multitudes making accession to these Judicatures, it is a thing at no rate believable: As it would imply an absurdity, somewhat of kin to transubstantiation; to believe that multitudes could get clearness to embrace a testimony, as public witnesses for Christ against this generation, with respect to many grounds of the Lord’s controversy therewith, both old and late,—from the consideration of their not being bound to make any conscience of it before God, whether they were true or false witnesses in the matter.

And as it will not believe, that the author could be himself when writing such a story,—which was never thought nor wrought nor heard tell of, till it broke out in Fancy no Faith: So the only hair from which Fancy can be supposed to have spun such a tether, can be no more than this, viz. As no accessions were received by the Associate Judicatures, after publication of the Judicial Testimony, (unless there should be any ground to except the Associate Session of Dunfermline),—but in a way of adherence to that Testimony, upon declarations of having perusued and being satisfied with it; without professing to retain any scruple
scruple about the historical part thereof, as to the truth or falsehood of
the matter; so it was usual for people acceding, to express their
satisfaction with the Testimony in modest terms; as being according to
their capacity: And the Associate Judicatures made no difficulty of
receiving accessions so expressed, without supposing that all their
people could have an equal comprehension of it.

However, this Author tell us,—that the exception which he
pretends these Judicatures used to make about the historical part, was
“for this good reason; because the truth thereof depended upon fallible
history.” But still no person could, except in a way of dreadful juggling
with God and man, profess to engage in a solemn Confession of or
Testimony against public evils; without coming to have his conscience
free of scruple or dubiety, in the mean time, about the truth thereof:
And as there is no impossibility of his proving to be mistaken in some
particulars; when once that comes to be suitably documented unto him,
his ignorance and mistake will then come in for new matter of
confession and humiliation. Moreover, as it is one thing for our
histories now to be fallible; and another thing, to have them actually
failing: So, if the reason of the second commandment, as to visiting the
iniquity of the fathers upon the children, can still be binding on our
consciences before God—and if thus a confessing not only our iniquity,
but also the iniquity of our fathers (Lev. xxvi. 40.), can be competent
for and incumbent upon us now-a-days; then even the truth of fallible
history, in some certain degree of evidence, must be binding on our
consciences before God in this matter,—as it is only from such history
that we now-a-days can gather any view of these iniquities.

What then is the degree of evidence necessary here? Why, we
have the LORD’s express warrant (Deut. xvii. 2 Cor. xiii.1.) to let our
consciences rest satisfied about the truth of a fact, upon the attestation
of two or three witnesses. Wherefore, unless we might turn scepticks
about the iniquity of our fathers,—by waiting for other evidence than is
possible, and than the LORD requires us to let our consciences rest
satisfied with, in such a case: There cannot be justly pretended any lack
of necessary evidence unto all concerned, about the matters of fact laid
down in the Testimony, as to the public evils therein testified against,—
the truth whereof we have, upon the matter, attested unto us by many
thousands of witnesses; as they are suitably gathered from the most
public history and records of the kingdom, within these hundred years
backward,—so that the truth of them has been lying openly before the
world, uncontroverted by any known person to this very day.

UNCONTROVERTED: For amidst any bustle that some are now
making about falsehoods in the Testimony,—it is not, after all, any
matters of fact properly, which they venture to controvert; they are only
raising a new and most absurd

controversy
controversy about the meaning of some facts, the meaning of some Acts of Parliament,—which is not a matter of fact, but of judgment.

And particularly, what is alleged from the rescinding of the Anniversary Act, (which however they cannot pretend was rescinded in the settlement of Presbytery, but afterwards), is, at bottom, but a new and absurd controversy about the meaning of that Act. For, (beside what has been formerly observed, as to the abstract manner of rescinding it); whatever venom was spued out, in the preface of that Act, against the late Covenanted-reformation,—as already razed by preceding acts; yet that Act itself, as to any thing new that was enacted and done thereby,—could not, in any common reckoning, be classed among the acts razing the said Covenanted Reformation; but among the Acts rearing up a new fabric in the place thereof.

But while our Author teaches (with such a monstrous imputation thereof to the Associate judicatures formerly) concerning the whole historical part of the Testimony,—That it is no proper part thereof, as a testimony binding the conscience before God; no binding part of it at all: There is a shameful and awful stroke thus given, at the root of all open confession and testimony; as to the public evils of the day, in the whole grounds of the Lord’s controversy with this generation. And if once the historical and condemnatory part thereof, as to what it testifies against, be trodden down; the doctrinal and assertory part thereof, as to what it testifies for,—could not justly stand in a way of secession: So that the whole of that Testimony, as stated in a way of secession, comes thus to be trodden down into a mire of wild mistakes.

V. And now, from all that has been said upon this head, two things are very evident.—In the first place, that it was no chimerical notion; to look upon these brethrens Defence of some burgess-oaths against the decision of Synod thereupon, as containing a material opposition to the received Testimony: While their prosecution of that Defence hath so soon brought out this matter in form. In the next place,—that themselves have given an ample, though awful testimony, unto the equity of that decision of Synod; as they have found no way to maintain their Defence of the said oath in opposition thereto, but by running down that Testimony.
A P P E N D I X  II*.  

Concerning the Extent of REDEMPTION.

Section I. The Scripture-doctrine of Redemption, as expressed in our Subordinate Standards.

This Doctrine is set forth, from the holy scriptures, in our excellent Confession of Faith and Catechisms; particularly Conf. chap. iii. § 6. chap. vii. § 3. chap. viii. § 1.5.8. chap. x. § 1. chap. xi. § 3. 4. Larger Cat. Ans. to Quest. 30, 31, 44, 57, 58, 59. Short. Cat. Ans. to Quest. 20, 21, 29, 30.—By these passages we are expressly taught, from the Lord’s word,

That “they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ;—neither are any other redeemed by Christ,—but the elect only:”

That “unto Christ, God did from all eternity give a people to be his seed; and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified:”

That “the Covenant of Grace was made with Christ as the second Adam, and in him with all the elect as his seed:”

That “the Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself;—hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father; and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto him:”

That it is “his elect” whom “God delivereth out of the estate of sin and misery; and bringeth them into an estate of salvation, by the second Covenant:” It is “for the sins of all the elect” that “Christ did, in the fullness of time, die:” It is “God’s elect” of whom “Christ is the Redeemer:” It is “to be a reconciliation for the sins of his people,—his seed,—the elect,”—that “Christ executeth the office of a priest; in his once offering himself a sacrifice without spot to God,—making “continual intercession for them:” And it is “the debt of all those that are justified (in God’s appointed and accepted

Vol. II. N n “time),”

*The Writer of this Display received a Letter from the Rev Mr Thomas Mair, concerning what is called Brae’s Scheme,—dated the 26th of October 1753; to which he returned an Answer, dated the 3d of January 1754: And this Appendix is the latter half of that answer; only with the alteration of epistolary expressions,—and with a division of it into sections, under corresponding titles: which was thought proper to be exhibited in this place,—notwithstanding any coincidence of it, with the Illustration of the Synod’s proceedings in the case of Mr Mair.
“time),” which “Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge; and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Father’s justice in their behalf:—He was given by the Father for them;” and it is “in their stead” that “his obedience and satisfaction was accepted;”

That “Redemption is certainly applied and effectually communicated to all those for whom Christ hath purchased it; who are, in time, by the Holy Ghost, enabled to believe in Christ according to the gospel:—To all these for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same; making intercession for them;” And all those who “are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ, by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation:”

That “the Lord—in the Covenant of Grace,—freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ; requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved.”

And that as “Christ by his mediation hath procured redemption, with all other benefits of the Covenant of Grace;” so our being “made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ,” and “of the benefits which Christ hath procured,” is, “by the application of them unto us, by his holy Spirit; working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.”

Section II. Of Universal Redemption.

The above is doctrine which we have solemnly avouched; and which stands in a flat contradiction to Brae’s scheme*. Nor can all the attempts to support that scheme, in opposition to the doctrine of our standards from the Lord’s word, ever prove formidable or effectual. As,

I. It is indeed pretended, and with an air of triumph,—as if the universal terms used, in many passages of Scripture, concerning the death of Christ,—did strongly display and inculcate the universality of redemption as to purchase. But there has been fully as much countenance of scripture allledged, in favour of the other four Arminian articles; against the doctrines of particular and absolute election, the impotence of man’s will in conversion, the efficacy of God’s grace therein, and the final perseverance of the saints. Moreover these universal terms of Scripture (as well as the passages which have been allledged in favour of the other Arminian articles) have been fully vindicated long ago, by the champions of the Reformation; from the charge of having any real tendency to favour that Arminian universality of redemption.

II. Though

* A Summary view has been given of that scheme, p. 132,—135: But there was a large exhibition of it, in the letter of which this Appendix is a part.
II. Though Mr Fraser acknowledges, in one place, that the direct reverse of his scheme is *expressly maintained by our Confession of Faith*: Yet he afterwards tries to elude the charge of his opposing our Confession; and that by an use of his distinction, betwixt the *common* and *special* way of Christ’s dying. Thus, when our Confession teaches, that Christ doth apply the benefits of his death—unto all for whom he died; Mr Fraser pretends, that this is only meant of all for whom Christ died in a special way, as he did for the elect,—but is not spoken exclusively of our Lord’s dying in a common way for others: And accordingly he insinuates, as if his scheme did not speak contrary to our Confession, but only differently from it; by saying more than it does, and something not so distinctly expressed by it.——Now, at this rate of explaining our Confession, all the certainty of its language is overthrown; yea, the plain and wholesome doctrine which it teaches, is forced to give way unto a doctrine of absurdity and horror. For,

1st, What can be more plain, than the irreconcileable contrariety of our Confession unto Mr Fraser’s doctrine?—Our Confession speaks *generally* about the death of Christ, as to the whole objects and ends thereof: But he pretends that it speaks only *partially*, not excluding other objects and ends. And if our Confession may be so used,—that its most absolute assertions about the whole doctrine of our Lord’s death, are to be taken only for limited assertions about a part of that doctrine; what certainty, then, can there be of its sense? what use can it be of, as a test of orthodoxy? what a wide door is opened for all errors; under a pretence of not contradicting, but only supplying the defects of our Confession? And must it not be hereby rendered like a nose of wax, to be moulded and turned according to every one’s fancy? Our Confession affirms, that *none others are redeemed by Christ but the elect only*: Whereas Mr Fraser teaches, that all are redeemed by him; even those who were in hell at the time of his death. Again, our Confession affirms,—that *to all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same; making intercession for them*: Whereas Mr Fraser teaches,—that Christ doth never apply or communicate redemption to the far greatest part of those for whom he hath purchased it; nor makes any intercession for them.—And are these things to be reconciled, by a pretended distinction between a common and special way of our Lord’s dying? It is doubted, if ever Mr Simson or Mr Campbell ventured upon such a barefaced and shameful juggling with our Confession; when pretending its agreement with their errors. Moreover,

2dly, What are we to understand, by this common way of Christ’s dying for others besides the elect? Was it a dying with any gracious design toward them, or for being of any advantage

unto
unto them? No: But, according to Mr Fraser, he died for them,—in order to get them more dreadfully damned than they could have been otherwise.—Thus, when our Larger Catechism affirms; that the Covenant of Grace was made with Christ as the second Adam, and in him with all the elect as his seed: Yet, on the other hand, according to Mr Fraser,—the Covenant of Grace was made, in Christ, with all the reprobates also: So that with respect to them, it was a Covenant of wrath and damnation; wherein Christ’s dying for them was concerted upon,—in order to transfer them from the hell of law-wrath, unto a hotter hell of gospel-wrath;—and that accordingly our Lord Jesus made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, became obedient unto death, was made a curse, was reviled, was bruised, suffered the whole vengeance of the law-curse; and that all this he cheerfully condescended unto,—for the end and purpose of getting the greatest part of those for whom he died brought under a more dreadful damnation, than what the broken Covenant of works could provide for them,—which was the travel of his soul, with respect to them.

But our standards of doctrine, with the holy Scriptures upon which they are founded,—are not only quite ignorant of, but quite opposite unto such horrid imaginations.—It is indeed a certain and awful truth, that gospel-despisers bring upon themselves a heavier condemnation and punishment,—than what they could have been subjected unto, if they had not had occasion of rejecting Christ in the gospel: But it was never imagined till now,—that this more eminent perdition of gospel-despisers, is any way the end and intentional product of the Covenant of grace, or of Christ’s dying; instead of being accidental to both. It has certainly been hitherto taken for granted,—that all the perdition of gospel-despisers, as well as others, is properly derived only from the broken Covenant of works: As vindictive Justice, in the curse of that Covenant, makes its demands upon sinners,—not only for the original breach of the Covenant, and all original sin; but also for their actual transgressions, according to whatever aggravations it finds them cloathed with. Again,

3dly, What sort of comfort, and ground of faith, is administered to gospel-hearers,—by this new doctrine, of Christ’s having died in a common way for others, beside the Elect?—It is indeed pretended that this doctrine opens up large grounds of faith, and powerfully obviates the cavillings of unbelief; when people are confidently told, that Christ hath died for all and every one of them, having paid the ransom in each of their names,—whether they believe it or not. But what is the real amount of the matter? What a woful imposition is it upon gospel-hearers, when it all comes out?

Let us suppose a minister interrogated by his hearers, for sol-
ving a few native difficulties to them upon this subject; and see what answers he must give, according to Brae’s scheme.—If the question be,—“Hath Christ thus died for us all, as wanting us all to be saved thereby?” The answer must be,—“No: He died according to that view, only with respect to the elect; for whom he died in a special way, from special love.”—Again, if the question be,—“Are we all immediately warranted, to rest by faith on the declaration of special love; as to Christ’s having died for us in that way, to get us saved?” The answer must be,—“No: The declaration of special love, and so of Christ’s having died in that way, is no ground of believing; for that is peculiar to the elect,—and ye dare not intermeddle with it, till ye know that ye are among the elect; nor is election a ground of believing: But ye are warranted to betake yourselves immediately, by faith, to the death of Christ; only as having died for you in a common way, from common love.” Further, if the question be,—“What are we to think was Christ’s intention, end, and purpose, in his dying for us in this common way from common love only?” The answer must be,—“He had no intention of saving you, in this way of dying for you; but his intention, end and purpose was, to get you brought under gospel-wrath and vengeance; as a sorer punishment than law-wrath.” Moreover, if the question be,—“Is there no method for us to get beyond this common way of Christ’s dying, and to get forward by faith to his special way of dying?” The answer must be,—“There is no other method for it but this; that when ye come to believe, or know that ye believe,—then ye come to know, that Christ hath died for you in that special way proper only to the elect; and knowing that Christ so died for you, ye may assuredly conclude that ye shall be saved.”

If now the hearers shall object and say,—“It seems our faith is not warranted to rest immediately, or at first instance, upon Christ’s special way of dying with intention to save; but before we dare intermeddle with this precious doctrine, we must first believe, or know that we believe; and that thus our first believing must only respect and rest upon Christ’s common way of dying:” The answer must be,—“all this is very true.”——But if the poor confounded hearers shall further object, and say;—“it seems then that Christ’s dying in a common way, which only we are warranted to betake ourselves unto at first instance, was only designed for procuring an aggravated damnation; and that Christ’s having died for us in this common way,—which is the only ground of faith, concerning Christ’s death, that we are warranted at first instance to meddle with and rest upon,—is consistent enough with our going to hell, yea conducive only unto a sinking us deeper

“there:”
“there:” The concluding answer must now be,—“That all this likewise is very true; yea, Christ’s having died for you all and every one, in a common way,—which is all about his death that ye dare immediately rest upon,—could consist well enough with your having been in hell before he died.”——This, then is the genuine and best state of the matter, according to Brae’s Scheme: And now, what a poor, imaginary, melancholy ground of faith remains; in the revelation of Christ crucified? But,

III. The glorious and sure ground of faith, in the revelation of our Lord’s death, is of a ravishing satisfaction to the faith of his people; as that ground is set forth, in the doctrine of our standards, from the Scriptures of truth. According to this our received doctrine,—Christ died not out of hatred unto any, far less the generality of mankind; and his death is not a common mean of hatred as well as love;—which are the abominable fancies of Brae’s scheme: But his death proceedeth altogether from the sovereign good pleasure of God, exercised in a way of grace and love toward an elect company of lost mankind; it was only out of love to them, in compliance with the father’s will, that he laid down his life; and his death is altogether the glorious mean through which divine love gets a full vent upon them,—to the honour of law and justice, and to the praise of the glory of free grace. Moreover, according to this our received doctrine—there is a necessary and infallible connexion betwixt the death of Christ, and the final application of all its benefits; unto all and every one of those for whom he paid a ransom in his death: It is the infallible consequence of his death,—that all in whose room he died are in due time effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and glorified: He is a faithful and effectual intercessor, for the actual and eternal redemption of all those for whom he shed his blood as the price of their redemption: And of all whom the father hath, in any sense, given unto him, to be redeemed by him,—he will not, he must not, he cannot lose any.—Thus, when sinners are called to betake themselves to Christ crucified, as exhibited to them in the gospel; they have no wrath, but all grace,—they have no hatred, but all love, to betake themselves unto in his death: And they have his death to betake themselves unto by faith,—not as a matter of any uncertain, doubtful, or damnable tendency; but so as to find all covenant-blessings infallibly secured unto them, in the blood of the Covenant,—which they are fully warranted to make particular application of.

But now one comes to be stared in the face by a phantom, which is dressed up like another Goliah; for bidding defiance to the mystery of the grace of God, as revealed in the camp of Israel: And that is, a piece of reasoning used,—about the pretended necessity of an universal atonement, for warranting an universal of-
fer of Christ in the gospel; and for warranting the faith of all gospel-hearers, in pleading upon the death of Christ,—as a relevant plea for each of them, at the bar of law and justice.—Considering that the general terms of Scripture, which are alleged for supporting the new scheme of universal redemption,—have been already so well vindicated from all such abuse of them, in the controversy with the Arminians: It is not easy to conceive, how any should now revive that abuse of these Scriptures, with so much assurance; unless it be from their own ignorance of how the controversy hath been formerly discussed,—or from the advantage they have, in the general ignorance of others as to that matter. However, the new scheme under consideration, as it is hitherto set forth,—carries no appearance of venturing its main weight, upon these passages of Scripture which are alleged in its favours: But the chief burden thereof is evidently left upon the piece of reasoning before-mentioned; which seems to be trusted unto with very great confidence. And it is meet,—that those who seem to triumph, upon getting the mystery of faith brought so far down into the sphere of reason; as to be a rational work, an acting rationally, upon a rational ground: It is meet, that they should fix the principal dependence of their scheme, upon reasoning and argumentation.

Well, what is the sum of this pompous and boasting argument? It is,—that whatever be the nature and value of the ransom in the death of Christ; yet, if it was not paid in the names of all and every one, with a destination of it for them in its appointment and end,—a general offer of salvation through it, unto gospel-hearers, would be a mock: And that, whatever be the nature, and value, and offer of this ransom; if it had not been thus paid for all and every one,—it would not be a proper ground for the faith of gospel-hearers to plead and rest upon at God's tribunal; as Christ's sacrifice cannot be conceived to be sufficient and relevant in law, for taking away the sins of any, unless it had been offered up for them particularly. This is the great argument: Which is illustrated by a comparison with the case of a man in prison for debt;—as it is of no consequence unto him, however great sums of money have been paid to his creditor; unless he be told, and have to plead upon, that the payment has been made for him,—and the discharge got out in his name, as a discharge of his debt: Wherefore the conclusion is drawn, that, when a sinner is arraigned at the bar of God's law; if he say not, concerning redemption in the blood of Christ, this blood was shed for me, this price was laid down for me,—he says nothing at all.

Yet, after all,—when the new scheme, as resting upon this foundation, is fairly considered; it will readily appear,—that all
the mischief it intends against the mystery of grace in the gospel, must return with violence upon its own head. As,

1st, The design of this new scheme is, to turn away the eyes of gospel-hearers from the *revealed things* which belong unto them; and to set them a seeking the ground and reason of their faith, in the *secret things* which belong unto the Lord.—For it is the particular destination which God has made, concerning the death of Christ, as to the particular objects of its appointment, that sinners are called to betake themselves unto: And what is this, but to tell them, that they must seek a foundation for their faith in the secret decreitive will of God?—It is vain to pretend here, that it is not now a part of God’s secret will, but is become a part of his revealed will; that he hath destined, or (which is the same thing) hath purposed and decreed the death of Christ to be a satisfaction for the sins, and a ransom for the persons of all men. For it is blasphemous, to ascribe unto God any ineffectual will of purpose and decree,—a will of mere desires and wishes; such as that of destinating or decreeing, that the death of Christ should be a price of redemption—for multitudes who never have redemption through his blood. There is therefore no destination or determination of the divine will, as to the particular objects of redemption through the blood of Christ,—but that which comes to be accomplished in their actual redemption, which is still a part of God’s secret decreitive will: And any other destination in this case, which sinners are called to betake themselves unto, is a matter of mere imagination.

Moreover, it is a gross imposition upon the understandings of men, to pretend,—that the destination which God has made, as to the particular objects of Christ’s death, is any thing different, in its nature or extent, from the determination of electing love. The Apostle says expressly,—*He hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world:* Which signifies, that God’s act of election terminated on Christ; by stating the elect in him as the glorious mean of their redemption, to be brought about by his dying in their stead: Which is the very destination, and all the destination, that God has made, as to the objects of his death. Thus, as Mr Cole observes, in his discourse on God’s Sovereignty; “Election is the original pattern, according to which the line and compass of redemption is to be measured: To make redemption larger than electing love, is to overlay the foundation; and what is so built, will surely suffer loss.” Wherefore to direct sinners unto God’s particular destination concerning the death of Christ, for a ground of their faith,—is to turn them off from all revealed ground; and to leave them in a woeful nonplus about the secrets of election. Again,

2dly, The design of this new scheme is, to divert sinners from regarding the *true nature* and *value* of the atonement made
in the death of Christ; and to eclipse the glory of that mystery: So as to exclude the same from being of any proper account, in their dealing with God.——For it is not the atonement itself, it is not the price which the Redeemer has paid, it is not the righteousness which he has wrought out,—that gospel-hearers are directed to rest upon, as they find the same exhibited to them in the gospel: But they are called to found their pleas and confidence at God’s bar, upon a pretended destination thereof for all and each of them; as an atonement made, a price paid, and a righteousness wrought out, in each of their names particularly.

And as, in the comparison used, with the case of a man imprisoned for debt,—supposing it were ten thousand pounds; if his friend should transact with his creditor, so as to clear him from the debt and procure an ample discharge for him; it is all one matter to the poor man, whether the clearance were made by paying the whole ten thousand pounds for him,—or by getting his creditor brought down to accept of ten pounds, yea of any thing, in place of the whole;—for it is not the nature or value of the sum paid, that the man has any proper concern with in this case; but the acceptance of what is paid, as in full of all demands upon him; and the full discharge procured him, accordingly,—is what he properly regards and depends upon: So here, according to the New Scheme, it is not the nature and value of the ransom which Christ has paid, as the same is revealed in the gospel,—that comes to be of any immediate consideration, in our dealings with God for pardon and acquittance; but the plea and confidence of faith is made to turn, formally and precisely, upon the hinge of a pretended destination and acceptance of that ransom for all and every one,—with a pretended discharge thereupon granted for all, whether they use it or not.——Yea, such is the disregard and disparagement of the glorious propitiation in the death of Christ; that any setting of it forth unto sinners in the gospel, if the foresaid universal destination thereof be abstracted from,—is vilified, by an ignominious comparison with the holding out a purse of stones and clouts.

But, upon this head, it is proper to take notice of a disingenuous pretence which the New Scheme makes, of celebrating the atonement in the blood of Christ; by telling us, that it is of sufficient worth and value to have atoned for all the sin of devils as well as men,—if the Lord had been pleased to make such an appointment.——This way of speaking, about an intrinsic absolute sufficiency in the death of Christ to satisfy for devils, is what one needs have no quarrel with; according to any sense which it is supposed to have been formerly used in;—merely to express high thoughts of our Lord’s death, as to the infinite value of his sufferings; while the infinite height of their value can-
not be reached up unto, by any stretches of language. But, considering the use that this way of speaking is now turned unto; there is need of being more exact, in considering its propriety. It is one material objection against the propriety thereof, that there is no sort of precedent for it in the language of scripture: Yea, it may be further observed, that it is very improper and unscriptural,—to lead people off, by such a way of speaking, unto a forming of imaginations about the possibility of having devil-sin atoned for in the human nature.—But this is not all: for we are taught, in Brae’s Scheme,—that the death of Christ is so far of an equal sufficiency for men and devils; that it is not the nature and value of his death in the revelation of it unto men, but the particular destination of it for all and every one of mankind,—which makes it pleadable by men at God’s bar, in opposition to devils.—And so there is here a further evidence of the charge that has been laid against the New Scheme, in the beginning of this article.

Let us now see how the matter turns out, in comparing this with the preceding article. The amount of both is,—that the New Scheme turns men away from the revealed, to the secret will of God; by teaching them to seek the ground and formal reason of their faith,—not in the ransom which Christ has paid, as set forth to them by the gospel; but in the destination of it for them,—or in this ransom considered as destined for them particularly. Now, this is the very thing which unbelief, in compliance with Satan’s temptations, doth aim at: When persons, who are serious under the gospel-dispensation, come to be filled with distracting thoughts,—as if it were nothing to them, whatever satisfaction Christ has made; unless it has been destinated for them, through their being among God’s elect.—And it is indeed a melancholy affair,—if the very language of unbelief, and of Satan’s temptations, must be now turned some way into a matter of doctrine among us; under the pretence of finding a reason for it, in the scheme of universal redemption!—But,

3dly, The design of this New Scheme is, to subvert the true faith of the Lord’s people, in its whole nature and exercise; and to substitute a new faith in the room thereof.

For, as true faith has divine mysteries for its object,—so it is all a mystery, in its nature and exercise. It wholly proceeds upon a supernatural view of Christ as its object, by the illumination of the Holy Spirit, through the word of grace: And whatever ground it finds in him to lean upon, is by the discovery of this spiritual light.—But the new faith, according to Brae’s scheme, is a rational work,—which proceeds upon a rational view of Christ: As it pretends to find a rational ground in him, for leaning upon,—a ground which appears in the light of common reason; even that of an universal atonement in his death.

Again,
Again, the whole claim of true faith, unto any particular interest in Christ,—is by applying and appropriating him, as held forth in the general offer of the gospel: And the particular interest which it immediately claims in Christ, is such as becomes not true but in the believing thereof: While, at the same time, the method wherein true faith claims all its interest in Christ,—is by looking quite away from itself, unto the revelation of him in the word.——Whereas the new faith claims its particular interest in Christ, not by proceeding upon the free offer of him in the gospel; but upon the imagination of his having died for all and every one: And the particular interest claimed in him, is such as is pretended to be true,—whether ever believed or not: While, at the same time, its pretending to claim any further interest in Christ, such as is infallibly connected with salvation,—is not by looking forward to Christ, but by looking back upon itself;—as a person’s believing that he shall be saved, is made to depend upon his knowing that he believes; or to depend upon the death of Christ, not as he finds the same to be stated in the word of revelation,—but as he finds it stated in the eye of his own faith.

Moreover, true faith sets down its very first step upon a sure and infallible ground; by embracing and appropriating Christ, with his salvation, as freely offered in the gospel. But the new faith is made to take up its immediate rest and plea, upon the sinking and misgiving ground of Christ’s having died for all and every one,—as a thing consistent enough with their going to hell.—Thus,

4thly, The design of this scheme is, to forge a vain ground and plea for the faith of gospel-hearers; in a way of exploding and abandoning the whole of that ground and plea which the Lord has provided for their faith, in the revelation of his grace. And,

1. What is the ground for faith to stand upon, and the plea which it must use, concerning the death of Christ,—as we find the same marked out in Brae’s scheme? It is not properly the satisfaction made in his death, nor the everlasting righteousness thereby brought in,—as all this is set forth in the call and offer of the gospel. But it is a pretended destination of that satisfaction and righteousness, as having been made and wrought out for every one of mankind; or, it is that satisfaction and righteousness, only as considered under the formality of this destination.—And the pretended reason hereof is,—that Christ’s sacrifice cannot be conceived to be sufficient and relevant in law, for taking away the sins of any; unless it had been offered up for them particularly: That without this particular destination of it, for all and every one,—it could not be sufficient for removing the objective impossibility in the way of their salvation; arising from the Covenant
Covenant of works, and want of satisfaction to justice: And that therefore, ere faith can lay hold on Christ’s blood, for being justified and saved thereby,—the sinner must of necessity see this sacrifice offered up for him particularly.

Now, it must be here observed, in the first place,—that this whole doctrine is absolutely vain, as to the whole intents and purposes of faith. The sum of all is,—that the ground and formal reason of faith doth lie in Christ’s having died for all men; so as he satisfied for the sins of all, and purchased redemption for them. It is a very native objection hereunto, which greatly pinched the old Arminians; that if such were the case, then Christ had died in vain,—with respect to the generality of those for whom he died: While they are never actually discharged and redeemed, but perish eternally; notwithstanding the full payment which Christ is said to have made of their debt to law and justice, and the full price which he accordingly laid down for their redemption. The new-scheme method of answering this objection, is by telling us,—that Christ had a twofold way of dying, a common and a special way; and by coining a vile notion,—as if Christ’s end, in his common way of dying, had been to purchase a deeper damnation for the objects thereof: But whatever advantage this new method may be of, in giving some more self-consistency to the Arminian cause; yet the matter is thereby rendered much worse, as to the ground and plea of faith.

For what footing can faith get, in the death of Christ, according to this scheme? It cannot be pretended that there is any encouragement for it, in his common way of dying,—to purchase damnation: But there is here the greatest discouragement to faith; while every person is left to reckon it a thousand to one, that Christ hath died for his damnation, rather than his salvation.—And as to Christ’s special way of dying, there is as little room left here for the immediate rest and confidence of faith: While we are taught, that no person must presume to rest or plead by faith upon this ground,—till first he know that he believes, and that he is among the elect; but as to any ground for this believing, which he must first know, he is left utterly destitute,—unless he can build upon conjectures.

Moreover, we are told,—that there is no certain connexion betwixt the death of Christ, in itself considered, and the salvation of any; except it be, as his death comes to be stated in the eye of faith: So that no persons can rest on his death for salvation, as it is stated unto them in the gospel; or till they come to find it stated in the eye of their own faith. And thus the woful issue of the matter is,—that instead of being allowed any ground and plea of faith in the death of Christ, they are sent back to seek it in themselves: Or, their faith is reduced to the miserable absurdity,
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dity, of remaining for ever groundless and unreasonable,—till it find out a ground and reason in itself.

2. It may be observed, in the next place,—that as all this new doctrine about the ground and plea of faith is utterly vain, or no way serviceable to faith; so it is a mere counterfeit thrown in among Scripture-coin: And proves utterly different from, yea, subversive of all the foundation which is proposed unto faith in the gospel.—The material ground of faith, and the relevant matter of its plea, according to the gospel,—is the complete satisfaction which Christ has made unto the law and justice of God, by his obedience unto death; wherein he has wrought out a perfect righteousness, for the justification of a sinner at that bar. And this matter is not to be disgraced, it is not to be perverted,—by bringing it down into the sphere of a comparison with any payments or discharges of debt among men. For the satisfaction of Christ was not to be more or less, according to the smaller or greater number of those for whom he satisfied; and it was not to bear any distinction, in its real nature and character, according to any characters whereby those for whom he satisfied are distinguished from others of mankind. But his satisfaction for one sinner behoved to be as great, and the very same, as what could be requisite for many; yea, his satisfaction for some of mankind behoved to be as great, and the very same, as what could be requisite for all mankind: Because nothing less could have served for one sinner, than Christ’s fulfilling all that obedience which the Covenant of Works required,—and undergoing all its penalty; nor could any thing more be requisite for all sinners of the same nature, under the same broken Covenant. Wherefore, though the Lord has been pleased, in his absolute sovereignty, to limit the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ—unto some of mankind; as to the objective destination thereof in the Covenant of Grace: Yet this cannot infer any limitation or destination, as to the real nature and character of that satisfaction and righteousness.

Now, What is the real nature and character thereof? It is this,—that the satisfaction which Christ has made in the human nature, contains the utmost of what law and justice can require for any sinners of mankind: And that, in this satisfaction, vindictive justice has its full glory; or that the righteousness of Christ is what magnifies the law, and makes it honourable.—Thus, there is nothing at all about the destination of Christ’s satisfactive righteousness, as to what peculiar persons it was designed for,—that any way belongs unto its sufficiency, for removing all objective impossibility in the way of their salvation; but the whole of this sufficiency lies in its law-magnifying nature. What makes the sacrifice of Christ to be sufficient and relevant in law, for taking away the sins of any,—doth nowise lie in its being offered up for them
them particularly: But this sufficiency and relevancy of his sacrifice, doth altogether lie in its having been offered up by him as a public person in the human nature; and in its being a sacrifice every way corresponding to the curse of the law.

Though the Father and the Son, as sitting in the eternal counsel,—do consider mankind under the distinction of whom Christ shed his blood for, and whom not; yet law and justice do consider men under no such distinction, and have no manner of respect unto it. When a sinner sisted at the bar of law and justice,—they have no question to put to him, whether he be elect or reprobate, whether he be one of those for whom Christ intentionally died, or not. For it no way belongs unto the law of the Covenant of Works, it no way belongs to vindictive justice in the curse of that Covenant,—to have any regard unto the particular destination of Christ’s death, or the particular intention wherewith he died: So that this particular destination and intention, as to Christ’s having died for such a person particularly,—can be no part of faith’s plea at the bar of law and justice; but is a plea utterly irrelevant, utterly insignificant, utterly unknown at that bar.

The only relevant plea at that bar, lies in the law-magnifying and justice-glorying nature of Christ’s satisfactory righteousness. Moreover, the only method of a sinner’s compearing upon this ground, and under this plea, at the bar of law and justice,—is not by sisting himself there, as one of those for whom Christ intentionally made the satisfaction and wrought out the righteousness; but it is by sisting himself there in a way of dependence, by faith, upon that satisfaction and righteousness: For Christ is set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood; he is the end of the law, for righteousness to every one that believeth; and this New-covenant righteousness is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference. Thus, when a sinner compears at the bar, upon the ground and under the plea of this propitiation and righteousness: As there is a full relevancy in the ground and plea itself, so the person is sustained by law and justice, as having a full interest therein,—merely as he is found receiving, appropriating, and wholly resting thereupon by faith: And he is accordingly dismissed from that bar,—without any question, whether he be one of those for whom Christ intentionally died.

It is true that faith meddles with this question; and that a persuasion of Christ’s having thus died for a person particularly, belongs to the nature of faith,—as it is exercised through the illumination of the Holy Spirit by the word. But this point, of Christ’s having intentionally died for the person, is not the first thing that faith terminates upon: And, when faith arrives unto this point,—it is just the same thing with the faith of electing love. Wherefore, though Christ’s having intentionally died for
the person, be an height which faith rises up unto,—yet it is no part of the ground upon which faith rests: And it no way belongs to the material ground of faith, or the matter of its plea at the bar of law and justice,—no more than election does. A person’s election becomes the matter of his faith; when he is enabled to make first his calling, and then his election sure unto himself, in a way of believing: And thus the person’s election becomes the matter of his rejoicing, with joy unspeakable and full of glory. But, when a sinner is sisted at the bar of law and justice,—it is no part of his plea for pardon and justification, that he is an elect person; for whom Christ, and salvation through him, have been destined in the Covenant of Grace: The whole matter of his plea doth lie in the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ, as revealed unto him in the gospel.

Accordingly, as the satisfactory righteousness of Christ, in itself,—is the material ground of faith, and the matter of its plea; so this satisfactory righteousness is formally the ground of faith, and its formal plea,—just as faith finds the same laid out in the free and unlimited offer of the gospel. For faith has immediately ado with Christ,—not as he was particularly destined in the counsel of peace; but as he is set forth by the gospel, to be a propitiation through faith in his blood: And faith has ado immediately with the righteousness of Christ,—not as it was particularly destined in the counsel of peace; but as it is manifested in the gospel, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.

It indeed belongs unto justifying faith, to be persuaded, and to plead at God’s bar,—that whatever Christ did for the redemption of mankind, he did it for the person in particular; or to apply and appropriate Christ, as being made a curse for the person in particular. However, all this persuasion and pleading of faith, is no way founded upon any supposed destination of Christ and redemption through him; as intentionally provided for all and every one of mankind, in the counsel of peace: But is wholly founded upon the free offer of Christ; or the testimony and record of God concerning him, in the gospel. And the method of faith’s procedure in this matter, is by first appropriating Christ himself; so as, in this order, to appropriate all that Christ was made and has done for sinners: But still, the whole appropriation is made upon the foundation of the gospel-offer; not upon the ground of Covenant designs and intentions, nor with any pleading upon that ground. Just as when a hungry person is intermeddling with food set before him; he eats it, as having been made ready for him in particular,—and in a way of concluding, that what has been done about the preparation of it has been done for him particularly: But all this view which the person entertains about the food, is wholly taken from the food itself as set before him; so that his venturing to eat it doth no way depend upon his asking questions,
and getting previous information,—that the bygone preparation of the
food was intentionally designed for him, before he saw it.

Such then is the ground and plea of faith, according to the gospel:
From which the new scheme, upon this head, is evidently quite
different; yea of which it is openly and absolutely subversive.
Moreover,

5thly, The design of this New Scheme, amidst all its high
pretences to the contrary,—is to state the gospel-offer upon a new,
imaginary, and delusive ground; in a way of destroying all the true and
scriptural ground, for making any offer of Christ and salvation through
him unto any of Adam’s race.

The gospel-offer, according to the New Scheme, proceeds upon
the supposed ground of Christ’s having died for all men,—or in the
name and room of every one: But as the matter is explained by Mr
Fraser, there is an absolute vanity in this ground; and so in any offer
that can be made thereupon. For we are taught,—that as Christ
intended the salvation of some, in his special way of dying for them; so
he as directly intended the deeper damnation of the greater part, in his
common way of dying for them: From whence it naturally follows, that
every minister must stick in a perpetual uncertainty,—whether he
should preach up salvation or damnation through the death of Christ, to
any promiscuous multitude; or how he should divide the word of
salvation and of damnation among them, according to their different
interests.

Again, we are taught,—that there is no certain connexion betwixt
the death of Christ and the salvation of any, but as his death is stated in
the eye of faith: From whence it necessarily follows,—that ministers
can make no absolute and positive offer of salvation to any, through the
death of Christ; because they cannot look into the eye of other people’s
faith, to see his death stated therein.

Moreover, we are taught,—that Christ is not an intercessor for all
whom he died for; or, that his intercession is not by far so extensive as
his purchase: From whence it necessarily follows, that ministers are not
warranted to make any offer of Christ as a propitiation for sin; without
telling people at the same time,—that they must not venture to depend
upon him equally as an advocate with the Father, for any benefit of his
intercession; while yet their cause must remain utterly desperate, if they
may not immediately put it into his hand.

And so we are likewise taught,—that the declaration of Christ’s
special love, through which he died for salvation, is not a ground of
believing; any more than election is: From whence it necessarily
follows,—that ministers should not make an offer of Christ to be rested
upon by any, in respect of his special love and his saving way of dying;
but should warn people to beware of believ-
ving on that ground,—and to seek about for some other ground, they
know not what.

Thus we are also taught,—that none are warranted to conclude by
faith, from the death of Christ, that they shall be saved; till they know
that he hath died for them, in the special way proper only to the elect;
and till they know this,—by believing that they believe, or knowing that
they believe: From whence it necessarily follows,—that no minister is
warranted to make an offer of Christ unto any, that he may be rested
upon by them for salvation; except to those who know that they are
among the elect, by knowing or believing that they believe; and, while a
minister cannot distinguish these from others,—he must be shut up
from making any offer of Christ at all for salvation.

Accordingly we are further taught,—that though Christ has
satisfied the law fundamentally, in his dying for all; yet, in order to any
benefit hereby, it is left upon them to satisfy the law circumstantially:
And that they are to do this, through their pleading by faith upon what
Christ has done: And that this work of faith is to be performed by
them, as the very condition upon which their salvation depends or is
suspended: And that Christ has not purchased faith for all whom he
died for; or that at least, by an absurd distinction, he has not purchased
grace for enabling them all to believe; or that the bestowing of this
benefit depends upon God’s free will, without being secured in the new
Covenant: From all which it necessarily follows—that ministers are not
warranted to make any offer of salvation through Christ, unto any of
mankind; but in a way of telling them that they must do something for
this salvation, under the name of faith,—and must take their own faith
for the immediate ground of their interest in that salvation through
Christ: Without having any distinct and sure ground offered for their
faith, at least in its first outsetting; or any better ground than for the
general, doubtsome and abjured faith of Papists: And without having
the new Covenant administered unto them by the gospel, as containing
any provision of faith through Christ’s death, as absolute and free as his
other purchase; while yet they are, in themselves, as incapable of
believing as of fulfilling the whole law:—And what is all this, but,
under a pretence of gospel-offers,—to turn people back unto a desperate
issue in the Covenant of works?

Upon the whole, it is very evident,—that though the new Scheme
is given out, even with an arrogant assurance; as being the only proper
way of warranting, or accounting for the general and free offers of the
gospel: Yet all the gospel-offers which can proceed upon this Scheme,
prove to be a mere chaos of absurdity and self-contradiction; which
tend to lead sinners out of the plain way of the gospel,—so as to leave
them in the waste howling wilderness of corrupt reasonings and
inventions.
Section III. Of Particular Redemption.

Though the doctrine of particular Redemption, which is set forth in our standards from the LORD’S word, be heinously impeached; as if it could not afford any consistent and sufficient ground for unlimited and full offers of Christ in the gospel: Yet this will appear to be a most groundless reproach; if matters be fairly considered, in the reverence and fear of God. For it is not only of a full consistency, but likewise of a necessary connexion with this our received doctrine,—that an offer of Christ and salvation through him be universally and freely made, without any difference, unto all sinners of mankind who fall within the reach of the gospel-dispensation. As to which it ought to be considered, that,

I. Our Lord Jesus Christ, in his satisfaction and righteousness, is set forth by the gospel upon an equal footing, or as standing in one and the same relation to all sorts of sinners; without any regard to the secret difference among them, in election and reprobation,—more than if no such difference had a being. There is indeed a peculiar and distinguishing relation betwixt Christ and his elect body; a relation wholly founded in the Father’s giving will, with his accepting will, at the secret transaction of the second Covenant; and which is perfected by their spiritual union with him, as their mystical head, in grace and glory: However, all this relation is wholly abstracted from, in the general exhibition of Christ by the gospel; so as it no way belongs to the grounds of faith.——But there is a quite other relation which he stands in to sinners of mankind: A relation wholly founded on the glorious constitution of his person, as being God made manifest in the flesh,—with the general nature of his office, as being the one Mediator betwixt God and man; which relation is perfected, for a ground of faith, by being displayed to sinners in the gospel. Thus he is revealed as a God-man Mediator and Saviour, whose person bears an equal outward relation to all sinners in the human nature; and whose office, as a Saviour, bears an equal outward relation to them all,—just as the office of a physician is related to the sick. Now, this general relation to men is all that Christ appears in, by the outward dispensation of the gospel; it is all the ground of their invitation and access unto him; it is a ground which makes no difference between elect and reprobate, between saints and sinners,—but lies open to them all upon a level; and so sufficient a ground it is, that whatever unbelief and fancy do; yet faith can neither desire nor accept another. As,

II. All the hearers of the gospel are equally bound and warranted to betake themselves unto Christ, in his satisfaction and righteousness; and this without any inconsistency or impediment,
from his having satisfied and wrought out righteousness only in the
name and behalf of some. For the gospel-call extends to them
universally, without distinction: And no sort of difference to be found
among them otherwise, can make any difference of their subjection to
the authority of God in that call.——Moreover, as they are all under the
same obligation to receive and rest upon Christ; so they have all the
same access and encouragement to do so. Because, in the first place, it
is all one and the same relation wherein Christ appears to them by the
gospel; as before explained: And in the next place, it is a gross error,
the cardinal error of the New Scheme; to suppose that the particular
intention of Christ’s dying, or the particular covenant-destination of his
satisfaction and righteousness,—is of any account at the bar of law and
justice, or any way belongs to the pleadableness thereof at that bar. On
the contrary, as hath been already evidenced, the only matter which is
respected, in the case of a sinner’s pleading and justification at God’s
bar,—is the law-magnifying and justice-glorying nature of Christ’s
satisfactory righteousness; as the same is found to be wholly rested on
by faith: So that law and justice have no more to say, to whomsoever
they find standing on this glorious ground in a way of believing. There
is therefore no difference among men, in the present case; except as to
who are enabled to believe, and who not: But a being bound and
warranted to believe, is of a quite other consideration, And,

III. In the gospel-offer, according to the doctrine of particular
redemption,—Christ’s death is set forth, as being no way intended for
and productive of damnation; but only of salvation, to the glory of God:
So that salvation only is preached up through his death,—to be looked
for therein, without any dread of the contrary; while it is vindictive
justice in the old-covenant curse, that stands ready to bring an
aggravated destruction upon all the despisers of his death.

Again, the love out of which he died is set forth, as being
altogether one love; one special love, the greatest special love;—a love
which infallibly procures the salvation of all its objects.—And though
the secret termination of this love be only upon his own people; yet his
love is not declared to them as elect, but as mankind-sinners: Or, it is
declared to be a love of the same extent with his death, bearing the very
same respect unto sinners. Wherefore, when sinners are called to rest
immediately by faith upon his death,—they are called to rest
immediately upon the declaration of his special love; because a coming
by faith unto his death, which all gospel-hearers are equally and fully
warranted to do,—is just a coming within the compass of that special
love.

Moreover,
Moreover, Christ’s death is set forth as standing in a certain and necessary connexion—with the actual and final accomplishment of all the redemption and salvation thereby purchased; or as absolutely and infallibly securing the same. Wherefore, when sinners are called to rest by faith upon his death,—they are called to rest upon it immediately for all this redemption and salvation; concluding assuredly that they shall be saved: So that the conclusion is to be made by faith,—not from their own faith, or not from the death of Christ as stated in the eye of their faith; but from the death of Christ itself, as stated unto their faith in the gospel.

And further, the intercession of Christ is set forth as being of the same extent with his sacrifice or atonement, and bearing the very same respect unto sinners; while he is an interceding high-priest, just as far as he is an atoning high-priest: So that when sinners are called to rest upon Christ as the atonement for their sins,—they are called to rest upon him equally as their advocate with the Father, for all the benefit of his intercession; committing all their case and cause immediately into his hands, as appearing in the presence of God for them. Again,

IV. In the gospel-offer, according to the doctrine of particular redemption,—Christ crucified is set forth as having made an absolute purchase, not only of redemption and salvation objectively considered; but likewise of all subjective grace, particularly saving faith, through which all his other purchase must become effectual: So that the purchase of faith is of the same extent with the satisfaction made in his death,—bearing the very same respect unto sinners.

Thus, it is a vile contrivance, to imagine as if it were left upon sinners to satisfy the law circumstantially by faith; after Christ has satisfied the same fundamentally in their room, by purchasing redemption for them: And so, as if the effect of his fundamental satisfaction for them were in many cases prevented, with his own consent,—by the failure of their circumstantial satisfaction; or by their failing to perform the same, as the very condition upon which their salvation depends and is suspended. For, on the contrary, though faith be the great duty of sinners,—and the great mean, on their part, of their saving interest in Christ; yet this faith is no more left to depend upon them, than the purchase of their redemption itself: But the purchase of faith, to be freely bestowed upon and wrought in sinners, as a covenant-blessing,—is of the same extent and tenor with all Christ’s other purchase; all which is therefore made effectual through faith, without any remaining possibility of a disappointment.—Accordingly, when sinners are called to Christ as the author of eternal salvation; they are equally called to him, as the author and finisher of faith; which is obtained through the righ-

eousness
teousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Nor can any fail of obtaining the faith which he has purchased, but through their aversion from the method of purchase in his death; rejecting that ground of faith, as useless or unnecessary. And so,

V. In the gospel-offer, according to the doctrine of particular redemption,—Christ is set forth as the glorious applier of all that he has purchased; by the efficacious working of his Holy Spirit. His application of the purchased redemption, is of the same extent with the purchase thereof,—bearing the very same respect unto sinners. Thus there is nothing left to depend upon them,—as a circumstantial satisfying of the law, or a condition of their salvation: But the glorious Captain of Salvation has all the work in his own hand, depending wholly upon himself; as to the exercise of his prophetical and kingly offices,—in consequence of his intercession, upon the footing of his atonement. And therefore, when sinners are called to receive and rest upon Christ in a way of duty,—improving him for the whole of their salvation; they at the same time have him to depend immediately upon, for working in them both to will and to do,—working all their works in them, and perfecting that which concerneth them: Nor can any fail of experiencing the grace of Christ, in his applying to them the purchased redemption; otherwise than through their despising and rejecting the purchase thereof in his blood, which they are fully warranted to betake themselves unto. But,

VI. When sinners are called to believe on Christ, as he is set forth unto them in the gospel-offer; it is not to believe on him any way,—but according to a certain prescribed order. For the conceiving hereof, it is to be observed, in the first place; that though faith, considered as a privilege or gift to be bestowed, is of a limited nature,—having a respect only to some; yet faith, considered as a duty, bears no manner of limitation,—but equally respects all the hearers of the gospel: And as it is immediately, or at first instance, under the consideration of duty,—that faith is required of them; so all who are brought really to aim at it as their duty, come to experience it as their privilege.

In the next place, The first thing that a person’s faith terminates, or is called to terminate upon,—is by no means such a proposition as this, Christ has died for me in particular; or, he intended his death to be a ransom for me in particular: And all the clamour of the New Scheme, as if gospel-hearers were called to believe a lye, unless Christ had died intentionally for each of them,—is wholly groundless and erroneous; seeing no body, elect or reprobate, saint or sinner, is called to believe any such thing at first instance. What faith immediately has ado with, is the present offer of Christ in the word of grace; generally and indefinitely,—as the propitiation for our sins, and the Lord our Righteousness:

And
And a person is called to believe, by an appropriating act or persuasion of faith, upon the footing of this present offer,—that Christ is his in particular, according to the offer; in all that he was made, hath done, and is for sinners.

Now, this interest in Christ which faith appropriates, is not merely the common interest which was true before believing; but it is a particular, special, saving interest,—which becomes not true till in the believing of it: And herein, especially, lies the supernatural mystery of faith. For the particular interest in Christ which it appropriates, consists in the person’s actual absolution at the bar of law and justice,—through the propitiation in Christ’s blood which is depended upon; or it consists in the person’s being actually found at that bar, to have a righteous standing in Christ as the Lord his Righteousness; or it consists in the person’s actual investiture with the righteousness of Christ, as imputed to him,—so that he is clothed with the garments of salvation, and covered with the robe of righteousness. But all this is what never becomes true, in the case of any gospel-hearer,—till the time, and in the act of believing. It is not a truth from which faith takes its rise, but into which faith results and terminates: And it always holds, in the mysterious administration of God’s Covenant; that as any person is brought to an appropriating of this particular interest in Christ, by faith,—he is actually and at the same time privileged therewith. Thus it is, then, that a person takes possession of Christ and salvation, by faith; appropriating to himself what before did lie in common, upon the field of the gospel-offer.——And this is what the wicked council of Trent understood well enough to be the Protestant doctrine of faith; when they pronounced a devilish curse against any who should say,—“that a man is absolved from sin and justified, by that, that he assuredly believes himself to be absolved and justified.”

All this direct appropriation of faith, is excluded and extinguished by the New Scheme: While it teaches sinners to take some rational way of pleading, upon the general ground of Christ’s having died for all men; and then rationally to infer their saving interest in Christ,—from their belief or knowledge, that they have attained to this way of pleading. But the mystery of faith’s appropriation is a quite other matter. Nor is this appropriation any thing more, than what corresponds to the testimony and record of God in his word of grace; being just the echo which faith returns unto the same: While the general and indefinite revelation of grace is calculated for being taken home, by the sinner, in a particular application,—and cannot otherwise get any suitable entertainment. And however much a person may be at a loss to find out a sufficient ground for this appropriation, in the general offer and promise,—while only looked unto by the eye of reason; yet, when the light of that outward revelation doth shine into
Appendix II.   Of Particular Redemption.  

into that heart,—then the outward, immediate, and sufficient ground which it affords, for such a particular intermeddling with Christ, becomes obvious to the eye of faith.

Moreover, in this way of appropriating Christ,—faith not only appropriates all the present blessings of the New Covenant, and the promises of future salvation; but it likewise proceeds to look back upon and appropriate everlasting love,—with the love of Christ in his having intentionally died for the person's redemption, absolutely securing the same by his death: And it is always certain, that every person who is particularly interested in Christ, as presently invested with his righteousness,—through a present appropriation thereof, on the ground of the present offer; that every such person is indeed one of the elect, for whom Christ intentionally died.—Such then is the order wherein faith proceeds; the order of nature, wherein it closes with its object. And this order belongs to the direct outgoings of faith,—as it goes forward upon its object in the word of grace, through the illumination of the Holy Spirit; without needing to look back upon itself, for a ground of advancing in its assurance: While the sensible assurance of a person's gracious state, which is gathered from the evidences of a gracious work in his heart, is of another consideration.

And it is further to be observed here,—that though the other special privileges which have been mentioned, are inseparably connected with the present particular interest in Christ, and the present appropriation thereof by faith; yet they are not inseparably connected with the duty of making such an appropriation: So that there is no inconsistency, in the prescription of this duty to all gospel-hearers; while they are all upon a level,—as to the sufficient ground afforded for their faith, in the general offer of the gospel. And likewise,

VII. The general warrant and call which men have, to embrace and appropriate the gospel-offer — is attended with no real ground of discouragement, in the doctrine of particular redemption; but there is a strong excitement and encouragement to the duty, in that doctrine: While, on the other hand, the new Scheme natively leads off to a ruining indifferency or delusion. For when men are taught, that Christ has redeemed them all from the curse of the law, by paying the ransom of his blood in each of their names; and that this is to be believed, antecedently, either in order of time or nature, unto their closing with Christ by faith; and that their closing with Christ by faith, lies in some rational pleading upon this common ground,—so as to make some rational inference from their own pleading, that they have a special and saving interest in Christ: The native and evident tendency of all this is, to let them rest in a state of indifferency about their natural subjection to the law-curse; or at least,
least, to get them woefully deceived,—into a rational faith and religion, that sinks vastly below the mystery of godliness.

But by the doctrine of particular redemption, men are strongly excited to the duty of believing; while they are taught,—that they cannot justly claim any personal or particular interest in Christ for redemption, otherwise than by an obedience of faith unto the gospel-call; giving diligence to make their calling and election sure,—by quitting refuges of lies, in the way of receiving Christ as freely offered to them. And they are strongly encouraged hereunto, by the exhibition which is made of Christ crucified; as complete salvation is necessarily and infallibly connected with his death, or as all the blessings of the New Testament are conveyed in his blood; so that they find all immediately secured unto them, in apprehending and applying the blood of the Covenant.

Nor can any reasonable discouragement arise, in this case,—from the limited destination of Christ and his redemption, in the New Covenant: Because the redemption which is through his blood, is proposed with equal advantage to all,—in the same suitableness and sufficiency for all; and the secret counsel of God, in this matter, doth no way affect their revealed privilege and duty.—As if a man had got a common invitation, with many others, to a well-furnished table; though he understood in general, that some of those invited were never to have actual benefit of the food set on that table: Yet this could be no reasonable bar in his way of complying with the invitation; while he is informed that none are to fail of benefit by the food, but in the way of their rejecting the invitation. And when the man is set down at the table,—he would act most unreasonably, if he refused or scrupled to eat; till he first knew that his actual benefit by the food had, in providence been previously intended and secured: While his only proper way of being satisfied on that head, is by proceeding to eat.

For such is the glorious and mysterious harmony, between the secret and revealed will of God, in the concerns of mens salvation through Christ; that any genuine desire of benefit by him, or the widest actual compliance with the gospel,—can never exceed the bounds of the destination which has been made of him, or of salvation through him: nor can there ever be an instance, of any sinner’s desiring to be saved through Christ,—and finding himself excluded by the limited destination of Christ as a Saviour, in the New Covenant. But further,

VIII. The gospel cannot be rightly considered, as it is an administration of gracious offers and calls to sinners; without considering it likewise, and at the same time,—as it is the glorious ministration of the Spirit: Or as it is a ministration of spiritual things, by which the Holy Spirit draws sinners to Christ; and through which he
is given to work in them: So that the offers and calls of the gospel can never be truly understood and acquiesced in, by common sense and reason; or otherwise than through the spiritual blessing upon these outward means. For the things of the gospel are the things of the Spirit of God,—which the natural man receiveth not, neither can know: While they are not only a stumbling-block or offensive, to the natural propensity for establishing our own righteousness; but are also foolishness in the eye of natural wisdom, because they are spiritually discerned.

There is a spiritual deadness in the heart of sinners, enmity in their will, and darkness in their understanding; which must necessarily be removed,—in order to their forming any suitable conceptions of the gospel, and compliance therewith. It will always be liable to a multitude of objections,—among those who are unregenerate, unsubdued, and unenlightened: As it lies far above the capacity even of right reason, though without contradicting the same; and much more it was never designed for suiting the corrupt, false and carnal apprehensions of men. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth; for therein the righteousness of God, even of our Lord Jesus Christ, is revealed from faith to faith,—from one degree of faith unto another. Thus, the revelation is not properly made to the natural reason of men; it is not made for giving them a rational view of a particular interest in or access unto Christ, as the Lord their righteousness: And the attempt of the New Scheme, for casting the gospel into such a rational mould,—has no better tendency, than to get the cross of Christ made of none effect; by bringing our faith to stand in the wisdom of men,—not the power of God, as giving efficacy to a revelation which is the wisdom of God in a mystery.

But when the Holy Spirit comes, in a work of conviction and regeneration; when he opens the blind eyes,—making the gospel come, not in word only, but also in power; when he thus deals with sinners, as the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ,—and so, the light of the glorious gospel of Christ shines unto them: Then it is, that their particular access to Christ in the outward offer of the gospel, with their immediate warrant to appropriate redemption through his blood,—becomes a matter of powerful demonstration, by which they are pleasantly constrained unto the obedience of faith. Nor can any fail of obtaining the Holy Spirit for this end,—but in the way of their refusing or neglecting to ask him. Moreover,

IX. Though the gospel bears a declaration in general,—that there are many of its hearers, for whom redemption has not been intentionally purchased; and therefore to whom it will not, in the event, be applied: Yet there is no absurdity or vanity, in an extending of the gospel-offer and call to them; on the same level with others.——For it has seemed meet, in the manifold wisdom
and adorable sovereignty of God,—that his elect should be gathered by such a dispensation of the gospel, as bears no distinguishing respect to them beyond others among whom they live; or which abstracts from all difference between them and others: And if this were not the case, there could be no room left for any outward dispensation of the gospel; or for the mystery of faith in obeying the same. Moreover, as the material object of faith, or the atonement in the blood of Christ,—is of an equal sufficiency and relevancy for all, at God’s bar; and as the authority of God lays an indispensable obligation upon all, for betaking themselves to this glorious method of salvation; and as the saving grace of God, for that end, is restrained from none, but in the way of their slighting it: So his sovereign purpose of leaving them to perish in their rebellion and unbelief, can no way interfere with his making them objects of the gospel-offer and call; no more than it can interfere with his continued requiring of their due obedience and conformity to the moral law. Or, in other words,—the whole matter of the gospel is as much adapted to their needy case, as to that of any others: And thus it is no more unsuitable to have the gospel-offer and call extended to them, in their state of corruption and just rejection,—than to have the moral law pressed upon them in that state; while the event, on both hands, is of the same consideration. Wherefore,

X. All the hearers of the gospel, who remain and perish in their unbelief, must prove utterly inexcusable; without having any degree of apology for themselves, from the doctrine of particular redemption.—

For all the particularity that takes place in the doctrine of redemption, strikes against none in the way of their entertaining any concern about salvation through Christ; but it has a tremendous aspect upon sinners—only in the way of their setting at nought all the Lord’s counsel, and despising all his reproof. They have the same offers of salvation, with the same invitations to receive and rest upon Christ, that others have: And they cannot pretend, that others who come to Christ and are saved, have any better ground than they, to go upon; while others find the same ground to be sufficient, for drawing near in full assurance of faith. Neither can they pretend, that any supposed want of access and warrant is the reason of their not coming to Christ: For the reason lies in a love of their sinful condition; with enmity against salvation from sin—and against the glorious method of salvation through Christ, in a way of free grace.—In a word, they have no shadow of excuse; as if they had found themselves any way debarred from Christ, and left under any necessity of perishing without him: Seeing all their estrangement from Christ is voluntary, or a matter of their free choice; and the tenor of their indictment must be to this effect,—That they hated knowledge, and did not chuse the fear of the Lord.
Sec. IV. Of CHRIST’S Mediatory Kingdom, and common Benefits.

It is said,—that “our Lord Jesus Christ has not only an essential right to the Kingdom of Nature, as one God with the Father and Spirit; but has condescended, for the great ends of the Divine Glory and good of his chosen, to take out a new right, both of donation and purchase, unto all things, even in the kingdom of Nature as well as in the kingdom of Grace: And so, though both are committed to him as Mediator, yet the one is in a subserviency unto the other; and his administration is still in a suitableness to the nature of the one and the other: Still the distinction remains between the kingdom of Nature, or common providence, and the kingdom of Grace.”

Now, if all this were designed to mean no more, as to the subject in hand,—but that our Lord’s mediatory government and administration doth extend to all outward things in the world of nature and providence; in so far as these things are supernaturally ordered, unto supernatural ends, in the spiritual advantage of his Church and people; or so far as ordered in the channel of love and favour to them, with a subserviency to the purposes and glory of free grace in their salvation: And that all such orderings of these outward things, are the proper fruit of Christ’s purchase: And that all these outward things, as considered in the formality or channel of these gracious orderings, do hold of Christ and his kingdom as Mediator:——If no more than this were intended, there would be no controversy on the head; for all this is heartily agreed to.

But there seems to be more aimed at, of a quite different kind: As if all outward things in the kingdom of nature and providence,—even considered in their material being, as obvious to common sense; and considered in their natural ordering to their natural ends;—as if all these outward things, even thus considered, or in all respects,—were now transferred over to the mediatory kingdom of Christ; upon a new right of donation and purchase: From whence indeed it would natively follow, that the common enjoyment of all outward things, by all unbelievers through the world as well as by all believers, yea by beasts as well as men,—were properly from Christ as Mediator, and through the channel of his blood.

And according to this doctrine, which is indeed the doctrine of Brae’s Scheme,—there was no need of giving a caution, about any remaining distinction between the kingdoms of nature and grace; or about Christ’s administration being still in a suitableness to the nature of the one and the other. For all the distinction or difference now left, in this case,—is such as no body could blunder into a mistake of: Seeing it is no more than this,—that the outward things of the world have undergone no transformation or transubstantiation, of their natural and material being into a spiritual being; or of their perishing temporal nature, into a durable and eternal
eternal nature; or of their natural ends and effects, into such as are supernatural and spiritual. Such is all the distinction or difference left, in the present case: If it be taught, that all outward things of this world, in themselves considered, and in all respects,—do immediately belong to the kingdom of Christ as Mediator, upon a new right of donation and purchase; or do belong to his mediatory kingdom, which is all a kingdom of grace.—But one may absolutely reject this doctrine; as not only without any foundation in scripture, but also very contrary both to scripture and reason: And what greatly derogates from the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, as he is over all, God blessed for ever; likewise bringing a cloud upon his glory as Mediator.

It stands and falls with the doctrine of Universal Redemption, which has been particularly considered. And it is only proposed to subjoin some general observations; which will be of an easy application to that subject,—and to the whole controversy about common benefits: As also, to the case of gospel-privileges, as enjoyed by wicked men.—

The observations meant, are these following, viz.

I. All divine prerogatives and administrations, are to be ascribed to him who is our glorious Mediator; though all must not be ascribed to him as Mediator. And there is no controversy here, about what glory belongs to Christ; but only about the different respects in which all glory belongs to him. For our Lord Jesus, considered as God and considered as Mediator, is still one and the same person: Wherefore an ascribing of some things to him as God, and of other things to him as Mediator,—is not an ascribing of these different things to different persons; but an ascribing of all to one and the same glorious person.

II. There ought not to be a confounding of our Lord’s divine and Mediatory glory, or of his essential and acquired glory; for this must be a detracting from his Godhead. And to suppose as if all glory, or glorious characters and administrations, which are ascribed to him in scripture, were to be understood of him as Mediator,—is to deny his Godhead. Wherefore, as it was a gross error in the Eutychians of old,—to pretend a celebrating of the Mediator’s glory, as if his human nature were drunk up in the glory of his divine nature; so it would be a gross error, to pretend a celebrating of the Mediator’s glory,—by teaching, as if his Godhead were drunk up in the glory of his mediation or mediatory capacity.

III. There are rights and prerogatives of Christ’s Godhead, in the government of this world,—which cannot be suspended, sopited, or superseded, as to the exercise thereof. It is inseparable from his Godhead,—to govern the world of his creatures, while he sees meet to preserve the same; and that by an ordering all natural things of the world in their natural course, to their natural ends,—by ordinary and common providence. And therefore, to suppose as if all this common providence were now transferred
transferred over to Christ’s mediatory capacity and kingdom,—is to suppose, as if a divine administration, which is inseparable from his Godhead, were laid aside, for giving place to a mediatory administration,—or were brought down into his mediatory administration; which would be a material denying or degrading of his Godhead.

Moreover, the same administrations, materially considered, are, in different respects, to be ascribed unto Christ both as God and as Mediator. For each of his administrations, in so far as it was preparatory unto, proceeds upon, or is introduced by a satisfaction to law and justice,—must be ascribed unto him as mediator; but the same administrations, in so far as they bear any other respects, must be ascribed to him as God. Thus, particularly, the judgment of ungodly men, considered as it terminates in their perdition,—belongs to him as God: But the same judgment, considered as it terminates in a vindicating the glory of his despised grace, or in a displaying of his glory as God-man, or in exalting the triumph of his people,—doth belong to him as Mediator.

IV. The mediatory kingdom of our Lord Jesus is not of this world; and this holds true, concerning the same, absolutely or in all respects. Thus, though his mediatory kingdom is in this world,—and the things of it are things in this world; yet no outward things whatsoever, considered as things of this world, or worldly things—can be justly looked upon as belonging to his Mediatory kingdom; or as belonging to him, upon a right of donation and purchase: Nor was such a donation and purchase either needful or competent to him, who is over all, God blessed for ever. But the gracious and supernatural ordering of outward material things, unto gracious and supernatural ends,—in a channel of love and favour to his people, and with a subserviency to the purposes and glory of free grace in their salvation: All such ordering of these things, or these considered under the formality and in the channel of such gracious orderings,—are of a quite different consideration; being not of this world, though in it,—or not of a worldly nature: And thus, according to our Confession of Faith (Chap. v. § 7.) The providence of God, after a most special manner, taketh care of his Church; and disposeth all things to the good thereof.

V. There can be no proper enjoyment of any benefits from Christ, as benefits of his mediatory kingdom,—but in a way of communion and fellowship with him, by faith. Thus, no common material benefits, as enjoyed by wicked men or unbelievers,—can be looked upon as benefits of his mediatory kingdom, or as the fruits of his purchase.—These material benefits, in the most general consideration thereof, do proceed from God as the great Creator and Preserver of the world; in which respect, they are common to men and beasts. But more particularly, they always come to men in some Covenant-channel.—They come to wicked men, or unbelievers, through the broken Covenant, in the channel of its curse: And so, whatever material goodness be in these things
to them, as suited to their fleshly nature, like the goodness thereof unto beasts; yet there is no spiritual goodness attending the same,—no divine love, but wrath. Whereas, on the other hand,—these benefits come to believers through the Covenant of Grace, in the channel of its blessing: And so they enjoy these benefits, in a way of communion with Christ; as benefits of his mediatory kingdom.

VI. We are not to conclude, that whatever belongs to Christ, as Mediator,—is the matter of his purchase, and the fruit of his death; or, there are some things which belong to him as Mediator, and yet are not purchased by his death. Incarnation belongs to him as Mediator, but he did not purchase the same: Nor did he purchase his mediatory offices; while all his purchase was made in his exercising one of these offices, with which the other two are inseparably connected: And, in like manner, his exercise of these offices belongs not to the matter or fruit of his purchase:—But all these things are to be considered, as properly flowing from the sovereign transaction and agreement in the counsel of peace; for bringing about his purchase, and effectuating the ends thereof.—Thus, particularly, the outward dispensation of gospel ordinances, which belongs to the exercise of Christ’s prophetical and kingly offices,—is not the purchase of his death: But all the gracious effects of these ordinances, or the saving benefits which flow in that channel, as terminating upon his own people,—are the purchase and fruits of his death unto them: While, with respect to others, they are not enjoyed, but rejected benefits.

VII. No things can be properly reckoned the purchase of Christ, or the proper fruits of his death; but such things as the vindictive justice of God could not immediately admit of, without a satisfaction. All venting of the love of God upon guilty sinners, by receiving them into a state of pardon and favour,—or all that immediately pertains to their salvation; with the glory of Christ and free grace thereby: All this belongs to the purchase of Christ, and the proper fruits of his death; being what vindictive justice could not immediately admit of, without a satisfaction.

But vindictive justice could require or admit of no satisfaction,—in order to a preserving the natural world in its natural course, after the fall: Seeing that very justice, in the curse of the broken Covenant, necessarily required that preservation of the world,—for the production of the seed, who had sinned and fallen in the first Covenant-head. And vindictive justice can require or admit of no satisfaction,—in order to the conferring of outward material benefits upon wicked men, or of any outward benefits enjoyed by them: Seeing their enjoyment of these benefits doth not withdraw them from vindictive justice, but leaves them under wrath,—and is actually cursed unto them through a channel of wrath, ripening them for destruction; so that vindictive justice leaves full room, in this case, for the exercise of divine wisdom, sovereignty and long-suffering,—without requiring or admitting of any satisfaction, in order thereunto.—In a word, all doctrine about the shedding of Christ’s blood, for any of these things in order whereunto vindictive justice did not and could not require or admit of a satisfaction,—is at best but a doctrine about the vanity of his blood-shedding, and injurious to the glory of that mystery.
APPENDIX III.

An EXAMINATION of a late SURVEY*.

In the Spring of the year 1771, a very singular pamphlet made its appearance,—under the singularity of two different titles; one before the preface, and the other after it. The first is this; [“An Impartial Survey of the religious clause of some Burgess-oaths, of the constitution of the Antiburgher-Judicatures, and of the censures they inflicted on their Brethren of the Burgher denomination”]: And the second is, [“TEKEL; being a Candid Attempt to weigh, in the balances of the sanctuary, the merits of the Controversy so long agitated in the Secession, relative to the religious clause of some Burgess-oaths.”]

The Author’s name shall here be left to the proper remembrance of it, in the record of his own writings: While his Pamphlet now mentioned shall be referred to, under the character of the Survey; and its Author, under that of the Surveyor.

The present design is, to examine this Pamphlet under the following heads, viz. 1. General Observations upon the Survey. 2. Of the Surveyor’s absolute Falsehoods. 3. Of his calumnious Misrepresentations. 4. Of his sophistical Reasonings and malicious Invectives against the Synod. 5. Of his False Doctrine about the religious clause of some Burgess-oaths. 6. Of his False Doctrine about religious swearing under the Old Testament. 7. Of his False Doctrine about the Secession-Testimony. 8. Of his Corrupt Doctrine about the profession of Christianity. 9. Of his Corrupt Doctrine about Civil Establishments of religion. 10. Of his flimsy Account of his own party, in the Synod of the Separating Brethren†.

Section I. General Observations upon the Survey.

I. The Surveyor enters upon his work with great show in a general and lofty paragraph about suspicion; by which he tries to deter the reader from venturing to suspect him of any unfair designs or dealings: While he is not ashamed to insinuate, as if the doing so would be a dreadful parallel “of the rude treatment that mere suspicion, especially when joined

“with

*The Preface of this Survey, about Covenanting-work,—has been examined in an Appendix to the first volume.

†The pages of the Survey are referred to in the body of this Examination; and these at the foot are the pages of this Volume.
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“with disaffection, has entailed on—Moses, David, Micajah, Jeremiah, Daniel, our blessed Lord, his Apostles, Stephen; and a great cloud of more witnesses.”

Yet some readers could not avoid a suspicion of him,—were it from nothing more, than the fulsome praise which he bestows upon himself and his performance; as if he himself suspected, that others might not discern any good reason for saving him this indecent trouble.—According to himself, his Survey is impartial and his attempt candid; his “only aim being, to state the whole cause in the most impartial light,—rather as a spectator than as a combatant:” He is, says he, “a faithful historian;” matters are by him “briefly, but faithfully Represented;” he has “given a candid history of naked facts,—a plain and faithful account,—a fair and candid account;” and we have his sentiments represented in the most candid and modest light.” P. iii. 1.24. 35. 49. 57. 106.

II. But who could have suspected, after all this, that the Survey might turn out to be, as it is in fact,—one of the grossest systems of falsehood and misrepresentation, with unbounded rancour and abuse, that was ever imposed upon the Public? The Author has not formed so much as one material paragraph, from beginning to end, upon the subject of his titles,—but what evidently turns out to the reverse of impartial, candid, faithful, fair, or modest; in so much that every impartial reader must see, on the very face of it, the characters of a defamatory libel.—The Associate Synod is thereby charged with designs which they never had, with words which they never uttered, and with actions which they never did. Their language is all along misconstructed, wrested and perverted,—in such a manner as no language can withstand: While the course of their proceedings is tortured out of joint, as one upon the rack of a Spanish Inquisition; and basely deformed or disfigured,—as Christians were of old, for getting them exposed to the rage of dogs.

III. The Survey is not more distinguished by any thing, than by a very uncommon strain of audacity and impudence that runs through the whole of it; like the continued vapourings of a bully, instead of the “sober reasoning” [p. xxi.] which he has the assurance to pretend his having used. And all this is supported, in a great measure, by the Surveyor’s great ignorance of the subjects upon which he writes; serving to put one in mind of what some young ecclesiastics were once said to be, in another case: Indoctos illos quidem et stolidos, sed tamen impudentia et cudacia utiles.

As to those measures which the Associate Synod was mercifully directed to use, for preserving their Constitution and the Testimony among their hands,—he has boldly seated himself in the Scornor’s chair: As he avows his having thought proper “to hold them up to derision;” though the end of that mirth must
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be heaviness.—And the Ministers of the Synod are treated with most contemptuous insolence, in his manner of addressing them: “Stand forth, Gentlemen; for your work on this head is yet to begin;—are those things so, Gentlemen? Then be candid, be but just; for generosity is neither asked, nor needful in the present case;—ye superficial critics! who seek an occasion to censure.” He likewise insults them, in something of a poetical rant,—as being deaf to the “virgin voice” of “common sense.” And he tries, in one of his apostrophizings, to get the genteel world raised up against them: “Tell me, ye men of probity or fortune!” p. 29. 59. 82. 100. 104.

As to the fulsome Egotism (I—ism), or the Surveyor’s continued ostentation of himself through the whole performance; and the presumptuous singularity, of having so much printed in CAPITALS, often for a number of lines together, chiefly where the passages are most impertinent or unjust: These things may be thought unworthy of any further notice.

IV. The Survey abounds with base dealing, in the affair of quotations. As to various instances, some of which may be afterwards considered,—publications on the side of the Associate Synod are most unfairly used, by falsifying the quotations made from them: And this, not only in the way of suppressing material parts; but also of adding and altering, as best served the purpose.—Yet this is not all.

Wherever a reader meets with any passages under the ordinary marks of quotation, he is thereby led to consider them as the language of the party referred to; but the reader is grossly imposed upon, if he take this to be the case in the Survey. For many passages are there laid out as quotations, which are only the Surveyor’s own language,—falsely and injuriously laid to the door of others. The Survey is so remarkable for looseness in this matter, that the marks of quotation which it bears—are entitled to no degree of credit or regard.

V. The whole body of the Survey is laid in a form very unfavourable to truth; utterly unfit for an impartial representation of facts, or a candid discussion of matters in controversy. Instead of a regular and uniform method, such as a faithful historian and fair disputant would have used,—while the chain of facts is variously broken and parcelled out, the cause is managed proportionally; not in any honest and close debate, but in various classes of loose remarks: By which method the Surveyor has indeed served his own purpose very well; keeping the door open all along, for whatever slings at his antagonists might be occasionally suggested,—by what he calls (p. 12.) “a riotous imagination.”

At the same time, in place of sober and solid reasoning,—the reader is put off with a deal of low quibbles and invectives; while the Surveyor’s pernicious principles are not brought fairly on the field,
field, but played off like masked batteries. And things most unexceptionable, where no argument could be found to lie against them,—are rudely attacked by unmeaning puffs; one instance of which may now be mentioned.

It had been said, in a publication by a member of the Synod,—“that the matter of ordinary forms behoved to yield unto an extraordinary way of maintaining the cause of truth, when, no other way thereof was left practicable;” which is the same thing in general as to say,—that extraordinary cases require extraordinary remedies. And one might well have supposed this point to lie as much out of the way of contradiction, as any maxim or first principle of sciences.—But the Surveyor would, even insolently, contradict it; and how? “A person” (says he, p. 77.) “of very common discernment would have rather argued that, if the burghers conduct was so unprecedented, it must have contradicted such rules as are well known and long established; and if so, the application of these rules to their conduct was the most natural, successful and preceded course that could be taken, to expose the absurdity of it.” Now the reader may try his hand upon it, if it be possible to bring any sense out of this passage,—with a particular application to the case in hand, or to any case whatever*.

VI. The

*The reader’s first attempt to make any particular application of this general puff, must be,—in taking rules and precedents for the same thing; as, in civil society, particular precedents are called common law,—in distinction from general or statute-law: for no society ever had, nor (without a prophetical spirit!) can have particular statute-laws or rules about every case that might occur.—Well, the passage must mean as if it ran thus: “If the burgers conduct was so unprecedented, it must have contradicted such precedents as are well known and long established; and if so, the application of these precedents to their conduct must have been the most natural, successful and preceded course that could be taken, to expose the absurdity of it.” Certainly, what “was unprecedented must have contradicted precedents;” or in other words,—unprecedented is unprecedented! and certainly, an applying of precedents is a most preceded course!

But what fine sense is it, to teach an applying of precedents to conduct unprecedented! One would think, that if the conduct be unprecedented,—there must be some thing as unprecedented in the contending against it. And every body knows, that not a day can pass in the course of human affairs,—without having some addition made to the line of precedents, as much as to the line of providences; though some be much more remarkable and important than others: New precedents (at least circumstantial) taking place, as well as old precedents imitated; while every new generation must be as free to give such precedents as any former was,
VI. The Surveyor tells (p. xx), that “The condemnation of the Burgess-oath would have been very immaterial to the burgers; provided none of the connections of the Associate Synod had been concerned with it.” And, for aggravating this concern, he ignorantly and injuriously supposes,—that the condemnation was for requiring them to “renounce their Burgess-ship*.

But does he grant, as to the Synod’s decision against a present swearing of the religious clause of some Burgess-oaths by Seceders, (for this is all the condemnation meant); that as to this decision there was nothing material to be stuck at, beside a supposed disadvantage to some seceding burgesses: Does he thus grant that otherwise, or in itself, it was very immaterial? Then, certainly there as neither sin nor error in it.——And what must be thought of all the abusive rage with which the Synod is treated by him, on account of that decision; if thus there be not one grain of ill in it, nothing quarrelable but an imaginary consequence of it? Yea, what a shocking view does he thus give of his Party, in the strange height to which they have opposed the said decision; that they have not been thereby pleading any cause of truth or duty, with regard to Christ or his Church,—but only the cause of a few burgesses in Edinburgh, Perth, and Glasgow? A dreadful sacrifice indeed, according to him, have they made to that cause.—How to reconcile his above state of the case, with his virulent invectives elsewhere against the matter of the said decision; let him try.

VII. If the Surveyor had dealt honestly, in his opposing the Synod’s decision against a present swearing of the religious clause of some Burgess-oaths by Seceders; he would have confined himself to an endeavour of disproving this reason upon which it wholly proceeds;—that the said present swearing “does not agree unto the present state and circumstances of the Testimony for Religion according to new occurrences,—so far as serviceable to the real interests of truth and duty.

But as to all the ridicule and burlesque which the Surveyor passes upon the Synod, in the foresaid misty passage, and elsewhere,—about unprecedented measures and extraordinary remedies; the only meaning he can have, according to former publications on his side, is this,—that instead of the course which they took on the 9th of April 1747, (if they could not continue with them) they should have taken the precededent and ordinary course of making a secession from his party. Yet nothing could have been more unprecedented and extraordinary, even to the grossest absurdity; than for the majority to make a secession from the minority of a court, as would then have been the case.—But this matter is sufficiently explained in the present Volume p. 62.—69.

* p. 28, 29.
“Religion and Reformation which this Synod, with those under their inspection, are maintaining; particularly, that it does not agree unto nor consist with an entering into the Bond for renewing our Solemn Covenants:” So that he would have left the said Testimony and Bond unviolated, in his defence of Burgess-oaths against that decision.

But this is far from being the case. Instead of disproving the foresaid reason, he has upon the matter proved and established the truth of it; and so has vindicated the equity of the decision which proceeds upon it: He has done so with a witness, in the manner of his defence.—For he defends the cause of Burgess-oaths, not in any consistency with the foresaid Testimony and Bond; but in a violent opposition to the same: As it is indeed a cause which cannot be supported otherwise. Thus (however ignorantly) he endeavours, as with axes and hammers, to break down the carved work of the Secession: Yea, as will be evidenced afterwards,—he boldly tries (however unwittingly) to tear up foundations, with a horrid tendency to universal ruin and desolation; not only as to the whole interests of the Secession-cause, but also as to any proper form and maintenance of a Christian profession among the Gentiles.

Section II. Of the Surveyor’s absolute Falsehoods.

The Survey is greatly indebted, for what form it has, to a number of absolute Falsehoods contained in it; these being even the main pillars upon which the whole fabric depends: And they are confidently retailed upon the Surveyor’s word, without offering even any shadow of reasonable proof. But it happens well, that the contradiction to them needs not depend upon any body’s word; because these falsehoods, either abstractly or in their connections, do bear a self-evidence of being so,—or are contrary to what was notorious, in the time of the falsified transactions. And,

I. The state of the affair about some Burgess-oaths, previous to the meeting of Synod in which the decision was made,—is grossly falsified by the Surveyor. As,

1st, The Associate Presbytery, at their last meeting, unanimously appointed,—“That the several Presbyteries consider upon what Overtures they may think needful, for further Reformation; and lay such as may occur before the meeting of Synod:” As, at the same time, they unanimously and expressly pointed out the affair of the Burgess-oath, for “all the members to consider upon in their respective Presbyteries; for having their opinions thereanent signified to the first meeting of Synod*.” Now,

1. The

*p. 17, 18.
1. The Surveyor’s account (p. 41) natively suggests to the Reader,—as if the two ministers (Messrs George Brown and John Erskine) who dissented from such an Overture in Dunfermline Presbytery, had been against taking that affair into consideration; whereas they were only for delaying the Overture till another meeting of Presbytery, (when the opportunity of the first meeting of Synod would have been lost),—out of respect to some absent brethren: And these two dissenters were afterwards on the side of the Synod’s decision in that affair. After all, the said dissent, considering what is above expressed,—needed an apology, instead of approbation.

2. As to the general Overture from Edinburgh-presbytery, intended with a particular view to the same affair; the Surveyor takes upon him to say (p. 46), that it was “obtained by stratagem.” Yet never could an Overture be more fairly transmitted to a superior Court; as it was done unanimously with the said intention,—without the smallest hesitation, debate or demur. And so, when the particular view of it was explained at the meeting of Synod, by some members of that Presbytery; every other member of it present—acquiesced in the Explanation.

2dly, False accounts are also given, relative to the state of this affair,—at the Synodical meetings in the year 1745. As,

1. At every meeting during the said year, in which that affair was entered upon,—the majority, by far, evidenced a clearness for all that condemnation of the oath which was carried afterwards: So that the several delays were properly and immediately owing to their strong inclination for peace and for preserving unity,—while, amidst the strenuous opposition of a few brethren, some hope was entertained of having them at length gained; though several members found themselves obliged to remonstrate against these delays, which the majority was so prevailed upon to make*.

On the other hand, the Surveyor gives a most false and absurd view of this matter (p. 57, 58),—that all the delays were owing to “a very strong inclination” of these opposite brethren “for peace, and for preserving unity;” yea, “that the majority of the members of Synod were always averse to a condemnation of that oath†:” All which, if it bear any sense, can only mean,

*p. 32, 33.

†The Synod had said, concerning these opposite Brethren: “It is certain, that nothing but their opposition procured such long and tedious reasonings on the subject; and prevented the Synod’s coming to such a decision thereupon as they have now made, even at their first meeting when the affair was entered on, viz. at Edinburgh, in May 1745.” The Surveyor having quoted this passage in his unjust manner, as “a story” which they

“have
mean,—that these brethren, had they seen meet, could have obtained a decision on their side; in place of the delays which took place.—Yet every possibility of truth in such an account, is utterly excluded by this unquestionable fact; that never more than seven of the ministers were got to embark in the cause of the Burgess-oath, and one of these afterwards professed remorse for having done so*.

2. The Surveyor exposes himself so shamefully (p. 63.), as to impute a story to the Synod,—which not only they never gave any shadow of a foundation for, but which grossly belies itself: As he even affirms that they have “told the world, that the majority of members in the meetings of Synod in May, September and November 1745, were—against a delay of decision.” How, then, did they say that these delays took or could take place? And what safety can either men or things be in, at the hand of so loose a Writer!

3. After the decision or sentence was passed, the Synod began to be charged with neglect and contempt,—as to some Acts of Assembly against introducing novations, without having the same first communicated to inferior Judicatories for their concurrence; which Acts came to be insisted upon, in the bold style of Barrier-Acts: And the writer of the introduction to the Synod’s Acts and proceedings in 1747, had said,—“indeed it cannot be remembered, that even such Acts were mentioned, or that ever there was any urging that way, before the sentence†.”—But the

“have the confidence to say,”—and yet finding the vanity of an attempt to disprove it; he betakes himself to his ordinary relief, in a vein of derision, viz. “But I beg pardon; upon reviewing the passage, I find it is worded with singular caution: The public is likely to misapprehend it indeed, but the Synod’s veracity is perfectly secured.”—And what help does he give to the public, for a right apprehending of it? Just an insinuation, (for he has not ventured to make plain language of it); as if the above passage meant an allowing, that “the Burghers” were “the majority of the Synod.” Such is the candour of this faithful historian!

He tells, in the same place,—that, “so early as in May 1745, Mr Gib even protested against delaying to come to a decision.” But this is one of the falsehoods in which he deals so liberally; the truth of the matter being as on p. 30.

*p. 41, 48.

†He immediately added: “It is indeed remembered, that a Reverend Father, at the first meeting of Synod where the affair was entered on, suggested a proposal of transmitting the same in an overture to the Presbyteries; upon which it was observed, that a Synod was no more a delegate Court than a

“Presbytery;
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the Surveyor sees meet to contradict this (p. 60, 61.), as an *astonishing mistake*: And his giving the lie to that assertion, is upon the matter an affirming of the contrary,—affirming a falsehood; while it is really astonishing, that any person should presume to contradict what another says of his own memory,—of which none beside himself can have any knowledge.

And what evidence does he bring for his contradiction? It is just this; that a representation from the Session of Dunfermline to their Presbytery in July 1745, for having these Acts observed,—upon being refused by them, “was carried up to the Committee of Overtures at the next Synod, and strenuously urged there.” Now, supposing this to be fact, upon the Surveyor’s word for it; though the Writer inveighed against, who was a member of that committee, can remember no such thing: Yet how can it affect that Writer’s veracity in what he had said about his own memory; especially when the Surveyor could not venture to say, that any mouth was then opened in the Synod on this subject?

But that there could have been no proposal insisted on in the Synod about these Acts, before the sentence was passed,—is demonstratively evident (beside an utter silence of their minutes about any such thing, while no members were ever refused a marking there of what they insisted for), from two unquestionable facts compared, *viz*.

1. The Synod never came forward to any dealing by way of overture upon the subject in controversy, till the meeting in which it was decided. (2.) Among the several overtures then made by the opposing brethren, even according to their own account of these,—there was not one syllable of any proposal about the foresaid Acts; though that was the proper, the only time for it*.

II. The Surveyor’s falsifying work comes to a greater height,—with regard to the meeting of Synod in April 1746, when the decision was made. As,

1. He says (p. 46.),— “The Burghers were imposed on,—ensnared and hoodwinked,—by the Antiburghers speaking of going into an healing-overture in general, when they only meant to obtain a decision in their own favours:—The Burghers were much to blame at that time, for their credulity about general overtures from that quarter.”

But sufficient evidence has been given†, that this whole story, in all his malicious embellishments and repetitions of it,—is an absolute falsehood. Those whom he so accuses and belies—never had one word among them about general overtures, or an

healing

“Presbytery; and more of this affair is not known to have been heard of.” But this was a very different thing from either mentioning or insisting upon *Barrier-Acts*.

*p. 35—38. † p. 21,—24. 35, 36, 40.
healing-overture in general: And the particular overture which they proposed in the very entry, their only overture first and last,—was an *healing overture*, in the most particular and proper sense of being so.

2. He says (p. 59.), “The Burghers—consented to attend a second week, while *they had a clear majority the first week of their opinion*; and consequently could either have brought on the question the first week, or delayed it to another Synod, or kept their members till next week.”

And had they then “a clear majority of their opinion,” upon the subject in controversy! well, what came of this majority at all after-meetings; when only other two ministers (and never more, first or last, than four elders) were got to take part with the former five, in the cause of Burgess-oaths? And how could it appear on the first week, who were of their opinion in that cause; when there was an unanimous agreement, that every opening of a mouth upon the merits of it should be then abstained from*?—But the impudent falsehood of this story will be evidenced under the next particular. As

3. He further says (p. 59.) “All the ministers and elders who were thought to be on the antiburgher-side in case of a vote, were retained, and even an Elder brought up to attend the second week; while the credulous burghers had sent home many of their number who, it was thought, could be of but little service in promoting a friendly accommodation.” But the story thus told, by the pretended faithful historian,—has not the smallest shadow of truth in it; being a perfect forgery.

It is in general a base pretence, but necessary for the base purpose served by it,—that there was a *sending* home of any members: While the only shape of the thing that could take place, consistently with the nature of the court,—was a *suffering* of some to go home, who insisted on a difficulty of staying; an ordinary case in meetings of two weeks. And the gross falsehood of the above general story about *sending* and *retaining*, will sufficiently appear from a detail of particulars,—which that story makes needful.

Only three Ministers returned not on the second week; and of these, only one, (Mr Horn) did afterwards take part in the cause of burgess-oaths: While the other two (Mr Andrew Thomson and Mr Black) were only got entangled (and the first but for a short time) in the after-cause about *term of communion*—The Elder brought up to attend the second week, was from Falkirk; brought up by one of the “credulous burghers,” and a voter on their side!—of those on the other side, six had no Elders brought up the first week, (from Burntisland, Abernethy, Orwell, Midholm, Mearns and Lesly); and none of these six brought up or sent for any on

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*†p. 35.*
the second. Moreover, only two of the “credulous burghers” (Mr Fisher and Mr Hutton) suffered their Elders to go home before the second week; whereas five of these on the other side (Messrs Clarkson, Whyte, Archibald, Brown, and Mr William Mair) suffered their Elders (whom they had no doubt of) to go home: While the other two Elders who were so suffered, belonged to Ministers (Mr James Mair and Mr Black) who embarked not in the cause of the burgess-oath.—And of the six Elders who were present on the second week, they had a full proportion; three voting with them for the delay, and only two for the decision,—the other being silent. How base then are the Surveyor’s stories above-mentioned, about the majority on the first week of this meeting; with the sending home and retaining of members, as to the second?

But he makes yet a bolder step, into another piece of most defamatory falsehood upon this subject; of as villainous a nature as any, perhaps, that was ever uttered among mankind. He says (p. 60.)—“If some leading fathers in the opposition to the burgess-oath did, on the first week of that Synod, expressly desire Messrs Ralph Erskine and James Fisher to send home the young Ministers and the Elders of their party; promising at the same time to do so with their own young Ministers and Elders; and IF by this means they carried their purpose, at the expence of their own veracity and candour: It may be safely said, There is treachery, O Ahaziah! This information I have at first hand.”—Now, that the above story must be absolutely destitute of truth, is sufficiently evident from the state of matters which has been just now represented: But the intrinsic evidence which this abominable falsehood carries of its being so, deserves some particular consideration.

Such a bargaining among leading fathers as is mentioned, is not only quite inconsistent with the nature of any conscientious proceedings in a Court of Christ,—and must mean, that the leaders on both sides were disposed to treat young Ministers and Elders as a parcel of fools; but it is utterly unbelievable, by any who considers the deep seriousness of both parties about the cause in hand,—which could admit of no such gaming match concerning it.

Yet the Surveyor tells, “This information I have at first hand!” and who was that first hand? was it the only original member of the Associate Presbytery yet alive? but how then comes the story to be brought out with an if, a double if? Did he suspect that first hand of telling a lie; while none of the party had ever brought out such a thing before,—amidst all that heat of controversy, in which every thing was caught at against the Synod: Or did he suppose that an information at this first hand, from a (reported,) defect of memory through age, was not to be absolutely
absolutely depended upon? One of these two must be the case; let him chuse which: But, in either case,—what a front did it require for him to bring forth such a story at all?—Indeed his *ifs* make him appear to have been at first shocked by the monstrous nature of the lie which he was so maliciously uttering; though he soon got himself hardened into an assertion of the thing, under the name of *information*!

4. He tells (p. 44. 96.), that “the antiburghers—strenuously insisted, the second week, for an absolute condemnation of the oath as sinful;” and that the point condemned by the Synod’s decision “has been universally thought lawful in all time past.” But nothing can be more false, than that any absolute condemnation of the oath was made,—or ever once proposed; so far from it, that the only point quarreled and condemned (a present swearing of the religious clause by Seceders) never had, nor could have had any sort of existence in any former period*.

5. He affirms most falsely (p. 44.), that “the question was—*delay* or *condemn*;” whereas the state of it was,—*approve the first overture*, or *delay in terms of the second†*: Such a state as he expresses, having never been once proposed.

Yet he quite miscarries, as to any gaining of his purpose by foisting in the word *condemn* into the state of the question; for even his state of it could only serve to make a division of the members upon the *expediency* of the present procedure to some decision,—not upon the merits of the cause: So that, to make out an appearance to the contrary, he must have carried the lie a little further,—making the state of the question, to be, *condemn* or *not*.——He has therefore got no sort of foundation devised, for the insolent and disingenuous abuse which he pours out upon the Synod (p. 45.)—with regard to their way of reckoning the division of all members present upon the sentence itself, or upon the merits of the cause; a reckoning as clear and consistent as sunshine, when the clouds of falsehood and misrepresentation are blown aside‡.

He is not indeed ashamed to treat them with buffoonery; as if they pretended some new sort of knowledge about “the *powers* and the *placing* and *value* of *numbers*;” And then to write as follows, *viz*. “I really do not wonder that the Church of Rome, with all its assistances, can bring its votaries to receive the greatest absurdities and contradictions; when I see such *inconsistencies* propagated in Scotland, in an age so enlightened as the present.” Yet what do these pretended inconsistencies amount to? Just this:—An allowing, on the one hand, that only eleven Ministers and two Elders voted for the decision: And an affirming, on the other hand, that the Moderator (Mr Alexander Moncrieff), was well known to be a friend of the decision; as also

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* p. 22, 23, 24. † p. 38. ‡ p. 41.
that the other two Ministers (silent on the vote), and two Elders (one for a delay and the other silent), evidenced satisfaction with it in itself considered,—whatever difficulty they were in, from the violent opposition, about the expediency of a present procedure to it: So that (in their reckoning) “the division of all members present, upon the sentence of itself,—was by no means of thirteen to nine, but of eighteen to seven; and, as to the Ministers, of fourteen to five”*.——Such then are the inconsistencies, propagated in an age so enlightened as the present;” which makes the Surveyor cease to wonder at the believing of transubstantiation!

III. A new scheme of falsehood is opened,—about the state of this affair in the course of the year immediately following. As,

1. The Surveyor says (p. 49.), concerning the Synod,—“Some, I believe not a few of their Ministers, had made the favourite decision condemning the burgess-oath, a term of communion at their sacraments during the summer 1746:” Which must mean, that they required their people to approve of the decision,—before admission to the Lord’s table. But this must be held for a most false charge, of what not one of them either inclined or had occasion to do: And for a very good reason; that they made no publication of the said decision till next year,—so as to let any of their people hear it, or have it among their hands to be considered! During all the summer 1746, it lay hid from the people in the Synod-minutes.—What freedom two brethren used doctrinally, about such as were opposing themselves to that decision, is quite another thing.

And he scruples not to say further (p. 90.), concerning the pamphlets mentioned in the libel; “The Burghers did not publish these pieces, till the writings and preachings on the Antiburgher side compelled them to do so, in their own vindication.”—But none of the said two brethren (or any other on the same side) ever uttered a word from the pulpit on that affair; till they found themselves obliged to do so, by pulpit-invectives against the foresaid decision,—under the notion of a squib thrown, a removing of antient land-marks: And as this was then averred in print to have been the case, it met with no contradiction from the other side.

At

*The Surveyor affirms the Synod to have granted, (Acts and Proceedings p. 41.),—that other two Ministers voted along with these five, for a delay. But this is only his own misconstruction: As it was only one of the two that so voted (along with the five Ministers and two Elders that afterwards protested), whom they distinguished by the character of a brother, viz. Mr James Mair. In the present reckoning he is abstracted from,—for the reason given on the page last referred to at the foot.
At the same time, it is most certain,—that the first printing by ministers on either side, was of the pamphlet first mentioned in the libel; as the first printing on the other side—was by way of answer to that pamphlet!

2. He tells (p. 47.), concerning the meeting of Synod in September 1746,—that “conference and prayer were proposed by the Burghers, in order to remove misunderstandings about the decision of last Synod.” But this is the very reverse of the truth, as the said proposal came wholly from the other side*: And that it was not true, rests on this good evidence,—that it could not be true. For no misunderstandings about the decision could be pretended to be among the friends of it: And the protesters against it (abstracting from the new question about Term of Communion, which they brought in when that conference was over†), could not consistently propose to be satisfied with any thing but a removing of the decision itself.

3. He also tells (p. 47, 83.), concerning the said meeting in September 1746,—that “the previous question being put, it carried to vote the question,—Term of Communion, or not?” But this is altogether false.—For, according to the state of the case in the minutes of that meeting, which were unanimously sustained as just,—the previous question only determined, that their motion for putting the above question should be taken in and reasoned upon‡.

IV. The falsifications are further carried on, with regard to the meeting of Synod in April 1747. For,

1. The Surveyor runs out as follows (p. 63), against the friends of the decision; “They object, that the proper time for a transmission” (to inferior Judicatories) “was before the sentence was given, and not after it,—But I am astonished at the unfeeling severity of the objectors; who—crudely insult the few Burghers for not making a deed of reference, while they own that the majority would not let them!!!”——Yet never was any such insult offered; directly or indirectly, or according to the remotest construction by a sober mind: While such a thing could not have been a cruel effect of unfeeling severity, but must have proceeded from downright insanity. And what was it, that the Surveyor had to dress up so maliciously, into a matter of triple astonishment? Nothing of any different sort from this,—that their

*p. 43.

† He tells another gross falsehood (p. 60.); That “the overture to the Synod at Stirling in September 1746,” was “for transmitting the decision relative to the Burgess-oath to presbyteries and kirk-sessions.” There was never a mouth opened about such an overture, till the meeting in April 1747.

‡ p. 43, 44.
second Resolution was found fault with for subjecting the decision to the consultation of inferior Judicatories, as already become and continuing to be a Synodical deed*.

2. He affirms as follows (p. 97.); “The Burghers—were so cautious as not to provoke the Antiburghers, by promoting an Overture to the Synod to reverse that decision:” Which must mean, that the opposers of the decision were for having a question brought upon the field about a plain reversing of it; yet cautiously abstained from this, as finding that those on the other side could not bear the proposal of such a question.—But what a shameful imposition is this upon the world? For the truth of the matter is: The friends of the decision did plead and insist for having it brought to an open review, in order to a question about whether or not it should be reversed,—instead of the covered and deceitful attack made upon it, by the then question about Term of Communion; and the promoters of this question could not be prevailed with, to let the other question about Reversing come upon the field†.

3. He deals very much in another piece of Falsehood; and no wonder, seeing his whole cause very much depends upon it: It is this; that the protesters against the decision were not parties, but proper judges,—in the question pushed by them, about its being a Term of Communion. “Indeed” (says he, p. 48, 49, 50.) “the protesters understood their principles better; than to claim a seat in the Court they protested against, while the cause wherein they protested was on the carpet.—The protesters against the condemnatory sentence always thought that the questions [whether or not the decision against which they protested should be reversed?—And whether the said decision should be a Term of Communion till such a time, or not?] were entirely distinct. They would not pretend to assume a power of judging in the first, because they were protesters against the decision: But they were under no restraint by their protest from judging in the last, because it was quite another subject.” And he owns it “the absurdest situation a sensible man can possibly be in, of being at the same time judges and parties in the last vote, in virtue of their said protest!"

But where is such another stroke of ignorance and assurance to be met with!—Can it make men parties in a Court that the cause wherein they protested is on the carpet? Can a protest about the public cause of God and the Church, can this turn it into the personal cause of the protesters? What must then have been the absurd condition of the Reformation-interest,—of the glorious company which stood with the Lamb on the mount Zion, in the days of the Reformation? It seems they must have forfeited all title to any judicial management of and appearance for that noble cause,

* p. 60. † p. 68.
by having become parties in it; because, in the entry, they became Protestants or protesters concerning it!

It is not upon a question about the cause in which they have protested, but only upon a question about their own protesting, that the members of an ecclesiastical Court can be parties: And that the two questions above-mentioned were entirely distinct, is so far from being an argument against the protesters being parties in the last,—that it is an insuperable argument for their being so.—In the first question they could not be parties; in the last, they could not but be parties: Because it was really a question about the supposed offensiveness of their own protest, and future prosecution thereof,—which was manifestly their own personal cause.

It is needless to insist further at present on this subject, considering what has been formerly said*. Only, in general,—the Surveyor might have as well argued; that a person is not a party, but may act as a judge, in a cause concerning himself,—when committed to the verdict of a jury! And he might have seen it to be a bad cause, which could not be supported,—but at so great expense of the credit of human understanding.

4. A parallel falsehood is uttered, and insisted on with great abuse (p. 48, 49, 64. 91.), concerning the members of the Synod,—that they took upon them to act as judges, where they were parties. It is told, that “their very first act” (on the day succeeding the breach) “was an act of approbation of their own protest against the Synod the night before;” that thus they “judicially approved their own protests,—both judges and parties;—the nominal Synod sustained itself sole judges and condemners of the two votes, against which the members of it had read their protestation the day before:” And that, in condemning the second resolution, they were “professedly giving judgment in the very question wherein they had been protesters but six days before;” that resolution being condemned (as the Surveyor tells in capitals) “BY THE ANTIBURGHERS, WHO FIRST PROTESTED AGAINST IT, AND THEN ASSUMED THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT OF JUDGING THE PROTESTED CAUSE.”—But the foul blunder and iniquity of these impeachments are so glaring, that few words need to be spent upon this subject,—after what has been represented already.

At the restoration of the Synod, after the woful rupture,—not one step of the previous contendings, by protest or otherways, was brought under a discussion,—unto a becoming the subject of a question or vote, for being either approved or condemned; so as to afford the smallest pretence for alleging, that they acted as judges where they were parties. But, according to the Surveyor, they acted so,—by having a simple narrative of these contendings in the preamble of their first act! And so, it must have been unwarrantable.

*p. 63, 64.
rantable for them,—to make any judicial acknowledgment of the Lord’s
goodness, in the appearances which he had enabled them to make for
his cause!—And their having protested in that cause, or its being
(according to the new style) a protested cause,—must have made them
parties in it! So then, a detestable indifference and neutrality, before
hand, about the cause of Christ,—must be a necessary qualification for
a judicial management and maintenance of the same!

5. Another falsehood is affirmed in the strongest manner (p. 70.),
by way of question; “Did not the moderator—acquiesce,—by
continuing to sit in court after the sentence was passed, in April 9.
1747?”——And so the Surveyor fears not to set up his face at this time
of day, in contradicting a most certain fact; which none of those then
present are known to have ever questioned, though set forth in an
original publication upon the subject: That the Moderator withdrew
along with the opposers of the second resolution, on the night of April
9th,—and returned not to the resolutioners till next day*. That
Moderator is yet alive; and certainly will not now say otherways†.

V. The Surveyor expatiates (p. 92,—95.) in a deal of profane
burlesque, wholly founded on gross falsehood,—concerning the privy-
censures which took place among the members of Synod, in April
1749‡. And he sums up the whole in the following circle of malicious
drollery, with an air of valuing himself greatly on the wit of it: “The
guilty judged the guilty; the guilty confessed to the guilty; the guilty
rebuked the guilty; the guilty absolved the guilty; and then the absolved
judged their former judges; the absolved heard the confession of their
former guilty judges; the absolved rebuked their former guilty rebukers;
and the absolved ministers then absolved these guilty ministers who,
under all their own guilt and scandal, had solemnly and formally
absolved them.”

But it was easy to see, that this turns out to a piece of downright
and impious banter,—upon the whole affair of privy-censures, in any
ecclesiastical court. For the members are then stated, all at once, under
a supposition of offence; which is to be cleared by their coming
severally to the bar, for being acquitted or censured (upon examination)
one by one,—proceeding thus with one another by turns, till all be
purged: And this indeed must fall under the lash of all the Surveyor’s
sneering, about the guilty and absolved!—He might have feared the
consequence of such licentious mockery, Isa. xxviii. 22.

Moreover, his whole declamation against the Synod, in the
present affair, proceeds upon this wild supposition; that every
degree

* p. 53, 56.

† He was alive, for some time after the above was written; though he died,
before the Printer got forward this length.

‡ p. 95, 96.
degree of guiltiness (even as to staggering and short-coming of procedure in the way of duty), utterly incapacitates the members for judging about the guiltiness of others, even however atrocious,—at least till they themselves be formally judged, even by judges altogether guiltless! And as none could thus be proper members of the court, but just men made perfect; all ecclesiastical judgment in this world, the very throne upon which the King of Glory sits in the visible church,—must thus be overthrown and abolished!

But the matter to be specially considered here, is this; that the foresaid abuse of the Synod depends wholly upon two absolute falsehoods,—which the Surveyor could not but know to be so, if he read (with any sober attention) these proceedings of Synod which he professes to examine. And,

1. He affirms as follows; “That Synod had never perceived, or at least never confessed” the matters of acknowledgment in the foresaid privy-censures, “till after they had been more than two years and a half under said guilt and scandal.”——Yet, as these very matters were the subject of solemn confession, in a diet for prayer, at their very first sederunt after the breach; and in a synodical fast observed on the Tuesday following: They were so likewise, in a general fast appointed at the same meeting; and in a diet for prayer (April 14th, 1748), before the first proceeding to censure*

2. With regard to those staggerings and short-comings which several members acknowledged to have taken place, in their contendings against the course of the protesting brethren,—at the meetings in September 1746 and in April 1747, (and for which the Surveyor drolls about them, as “deeply guilty and scandalous members;”) he tells this story: “After the usual form of being removed, and their confession voted to be satisfactory, they were called in; and solemnly rebuked in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for their said sins.”——Yet not one of them was rebuked, or more than admonished, for any of these matters: None having been then rebuked, but some who had things of a different nature in their confessions.—And the Surveyor will not always boast of prosperity; in the shameless artifices which he uses, for hiding sin on the other side.

Section III. Of the Surveyor’s calumnious Misrepresentations.

The Surveyor confidently wipes his mouth, in the following declaration (p. 41.) viz. “To avoid all suspicion of imposing on the world a false view of the facts I refer to, the Antiburgher acts and proceedings shall furnish the greater part

*p. 73. 77. 80. 92.
“of the materials for this historical sketch: Where-ever I differ from their account, or add to it; I shall endeavour to satisfy the Reader, that I do it upon sufficient authority.” And, after pretending to state “the principal arguments they rest their plea upon;” he adds (p. 5.), “I hope they have no just cause of complaint for unfair dealing, in the general stating of them.”

But notwithstanding this attempt, for seducing the Reader to a confident dependence on his account of matters; there is not one instance to be found of fair dealing in the whole. Beside the absolute falsehoods which have been considered, there is a continued misrepresentation of facts and perversion of words: While he deals all along in such foul manglings, and such violent wrestings, with such low quibbles and catches,—as are a disgrace to any controversial writer; being a manner of dealing which could equally serve to run down any actions that were ever performed, any language that was ever expressed.—And his pretended stating of “the principal arguments” upon which the Synod “rest their plea,” even forging the same by marks of quotation as their words,—is most unfair and unjust; like a man of straw set up for an adversary, to afford diversion.

It is not possible to give a full view of this matter by any particular quotations, or without a transcribing of the whole pamphlet; as it is one continued piece of such abuse. Nor is it proposed here to take notice of particular instances, further than as may serve to cast some light upon the subject in debate. And,

I. The judgment and principles of those belonging to the Synod, concerning the religious clause of some Burgess-oaths,—are calumniously misrepresented. As,

1. He makes all their quarrel with that clause to turn upon “the meaning of the true religion,” as these words are there expressed: He makes the whole controversy to turn upon this question; “Whether the same true religion, which was publicly professed in Scotland in the year 1640 and down to the year 1650, and authorised by the laws of that realm,—be really professed and authorised in the Church of Scotland, at least in a form that Christians ought to approve of, either at or since the said Revolution.” P. 2, 3, 5.

And so, he makes the Synod’s judgment to be; that the members of the Church of Scotland, at and ever since the Revolution,—have been Papists, Jews, Turks or Heathens: Or, at least,—that there ought to have been a Secession from her, even at the Revolution, as well as ever since; though yet they never taught that such a Secession was necessary, sooner than the year 1733!—Moreover, they never had one single word of a debate with any body, about the abstract meaning of the words
An Examination of a late Survey. Appendix III.

[true religion] in any Burgess-oath. All their debate has been,—about the relation which the meaning of these words is stated in, to the meaning of presently professed within this realm and authorised by the laws thereof: And all his arguings on a contrary supposition, are mere abuse.

2. He tells (p. 14.),—“That as the true religion is to be believed, so it should be professed, only upon the account of its divine warrant and authenticity in the holy scriptures:” And this he tells by way of opposition to the Synod, as if they were of a contrary judgment; or were for believing and professing the true religion, upon some other account. And what is all the ground of so vile a calumny? Just this; that, in their profession of religion, they profess the standing obligation of our Solemn Covenants.

3. He delivers it for their doctrine, concerning the true religion as mentioned in the Burgess-oath; “that the swearer of that oath now obliges himself, never to profess it in the form of a National Covenant.” But where did they ever teach, that the swearer thus renounces National Covenanting, (a thing indeed which the Surveyor evidences a full readiness for, in his Preface)? Where did they ever teach, that the swearer takes such an obligation upon him; otherways than as this is inferred from their teaching a certain fact, that he swears communion with the Established Church?

4. He says, concerning the Synod, (p. 24, 25.); “They consider the swearer as engaging to approve and abide at an human profession and settlement of religion, not as that profession and settlement now exist, but as they have a present and certain tendency to a progression, either in reformation or defection: This tendency and progression towards perfection, seems, in their way of representing it, to be the matter of the oath or the thing sworn to.”—A fine turn indeed! He is for disregarding the word presently in the oath; as if it respected only the past: And he pretends that the Synod is also for disregarding the word presently in the oath, as if it respected only the future! And thus the swearer must not be considered as taking any obligation upon himself, about any thing now existing; but as prophesying, and swearing his prophesy too,—about a future profession and settlement of religion.——Such is the senseless stuff that he palms upon the Synod: And the occasion of this vile calumny will be considered afterwards.

5. He brings in a member of the Synod, to a particular share of abuse on this head; while he proceeds (p. 25, 26.) as follows, viz. “Mr Adam Gib of Edinburgh—candidly owns, in his answer to Mr Scott of Dundee*, That the compulsory laws in matters merely of conscience and religion (which still subsisted anno 1649),—then so much praised and practised,—

“were

*Scots Magazine, for April 1769.
“were the remains of that leaven which has a chief place amongst Antichrist’s abominations; and these he reckons one great spring of the ruin which soon befell the Reformation-work of that period. It seems Mr Gib is of opinion at present, that the complex circumstances of professing and settling the true religion, in that period, tended—to what? not to a perfect Reformation, but—to the ruin of Reformation-work.” N.B. The words here printed in Italic are brought in, by marks of quotation, as Mr Gib’s words.

Yet Mr Gib, in the passage pretended to be quoted, makes no mention of compulsory laws: He only mentions “compulsive methods of dealing with men, in matters of conscience or mere religion.” And he makes no mention of these, with relation to the year 1649; but as “introduced under the first Christian Emperors,” above twelve hundred years before. He indeed says,“—these methods were for some time used in behalf of the truth: But such an engine, which was not fitted for any real service in the kingdom of Christ,—was soon transferred, agreeably to its nature, and the proper use for which Satan transformed into an angel of light had projected it,—to be a main engine for raising up and supporting the kingdom of Antichrist, having a chief place among his abominations.” After this he adds: “At the time of the Reformation in the last century, some specious remains of the leaven of that abomination—had not been got entirely purged out; the natural rights of conscience were not generally understood.”

But, in all this, Mr Gib was not speaking with any application to Scotland: As he immediately adds; “Some working of that leaven, in the compulsory terms which the Presbyterians of the English Parliament and Westminster-Assembly stood upon, when treating with the Independents of the Assembly and Army,—are what I freely reckon one great spring of the ruin which soon befell the Reformation-work of that period*.”

Upon

*Immediately after the words referred to by the Surveyor, Mr Gib proceeds thus, viz. “The case of Scotland, at that time, was some what peculiar; as the enemies of Reformation-work in that kingdom were, at the same time, enemies to the civil constitution and liberties of their country: And it cannot be justly inferred, from any principles of compulsion which the Reformers then stood upon, that they would have made the same application of these principles in such a period as the present; when people of different and opposite denominations in religion do agree, in the common character of good and peaceable subjects of the civil state. Nor can there be any thing farther from truth, than that the Seceders ever complained of, or testified against the Revolution-parliament,—for the non-revival of any of the compulsory laws of the former period.”
Upon the whole, the Reader may easily perceive,—not only a shameful falsification of Mr Gib’s words, in the Surveyor’s quoting them; but also a gross perversion, in his applying them.—How base was it! to bring in this passage as meant of the professing and settling of Religion in Scotland? How base! to represent compulsory terms stood upon in treating with the Independents in England, (which was one spring of the violent measures that Cromwell and his party rushed upon, to the ruin of Reformation-work); to represent these as the same thing with the complex circumstances of professing and settling the true Religion in Scotland? And how base! to represent the tendency of any such mistakes in the management of Reformation-work,—as the same thing with the tendency of the complex circumstances (or the general and prevailing way) of professing and settling the true Religion, in that period of Reformation; thus to have the credit of the Lord’s work buried, in the same grave with the failing of men concerning it?

II. The Surveyor deals in calumnious misrepresentations, about the meeting of Synod in April 1746. As,

1. The Synod is insulted (p. 42, 43.) about a “new method of computation,—Antiburgher arithmetic;” because they reckoned the number of constituent members of Synod, at that time, to be only forty-three*. And how does he impugn that computation?

    He broaches a very new “Presbyterian scheme of Church-order”; according to which “no Minister can be regularly admitted to a seat in a Presbytery or Synod, in a settled state of the Church, unless an elder has been also chosen by his session to represent the congregation.” A fine scheme indeed! A session, by their choice, to make an elder (not their own, but) the congregation’s delegate: And this session, whenever they please, even by a simple neglect of chusing an elder,—to lay their Minister under a forfeiture of his seat, in Presbytery and Synod!

    He accordingly tells,—that “the thirteen elders who were elected, but did not attend, had as good a right to their seat as any member of Court†:” That is,—Elders who had not come up

* p. 39.

† It is rather too low business, to take notice of the Surveyor’s insignificant questions; “Were not as many of their names as could be got, entered in the Synod-records as absent members? And would not the names of the whole have been so entered; if they could have been obtained?”

    But granting this to have been the case for some time, what is the consequence?—Could the clerk, (by his mistake, in recording the names of several persons whom some Ministers mentioned as their Elders, but who came not up); could the clerk thus make them
up for being received unto, and thus acquiring a seat in the Synod,—so
that no seat in it had become theirs; that yet they were constituent
members, and had a right to their seat! It might be well enough
supposed, that they had only a right to be received to a seat, when
applying for it,—upon the Synod’s finding them properly
commissioned for that purpose: Entirely different from the case of
absent Ministers;—who had already got a seat, and a habitual seat in the
Court; whereas the seat of every Elder is vacated at the close of every
meeting of Synod,—none to have a seat in the next, but upon a new or
renewed commission,—and upon this being sustained by the Synod, at
their compearance.

2. He says (p. 58, 59.),—“There is a suspicious appearance on the
Antiburgher side, that they had some concealed design to take an
advantage against the Burghers in April 1746, in the second week of
their meeting.—I must cancel the supposition, that nothing was
intended by the Antiburghers inconsistent with honour and probity, on
the second week of the Synod in April 1746: Probability and common
sense absolutely disown it.”—But this abominable and heart-judging
calamity is wholly founded on the contexture of absolute falsehoods;
which have been sufficiently exposed in the second article of the last
section.

3. He exclaims against the decision (p. 59, 60.), as made “while
the meeting was so very thin; and not one half of the members who had
a right, by office or by delegation, to sit, were present.”—But is it true,
that not one half of the members, who really had a right to sit, were
present? To use his own phrase, “common sense absolutely disowns it:” Considering what has been said a little above, and in the pages
referred to*, about three fifths were present, of all who had any sort of
title to the character of Synod-members.

But the Surveyor’s calumny upon the Synod, in this matter, is
also of a very pernicious tendency.—If the meeting of a court is
regularly called and held, there can be no difference of its power from
the fullness or thinness of the meeting; unless the thinness were below
the established quorum: As, in the Houses of Parliament, the
determinations are all of the same authority,—to be all held in the same
respect; though sometimes carried by a scrimp majority, even when not
a third part of the constituent members is present. And to introduce a
contrary principle,—parceling out different degrees of authority and
respect to

them constituent members? Or could they be made so,—by the Synod’s not
adverting, for a time, to correct this trifling absurdity; of giving such a place in the
minutes, to persons who had not come the length of getting any place in the Court.

* p. 39, 40, 41.
the Court, according to the number of members who think fit to attend; is to commit an outrage upon the nature of all jurisdiction and government in the world.

III. He deals further in calumnious misrepresentations, about the meeting of Synod in April 1747. As,

1. He says (p. 67.), “The majority of members was clearly on the burgher-side at the unhappy breach, in the evening sederunt April 9th 1747.” For evidencing this he tells (on the credit of his brother Mr Brown!) that “there were fifty-five members then sitting in Court;” yet he soon finds himself obliged (and no wonder), rather to “rest in Mr Ralph Erskine’s account,”—which (he owns) makes but “twenty-nine or thirty” over and above the “twenty-three” who “stood under the banner of a protest” against “the burgher-side.” And did the twenty voters on that side, did they make a clear majority against these twenty-three?—But he falsely reckons all the other twenty-nine or thirty, as on that side: When one of them (an Elder on the other side) had removed a little before,—and the Moderator removed along with the twenty-three, for that night,—and eight were directly parties, who had not any title to act for turning the balance; so that still no more than twenty at most remained for the parties, to make a clear majority in opposition to the twenty-three protesters against them!

It is needless to insist further on this part of the subject, after what has been said already*.——But another calumnious misrepresentation may be here considered; as the Synod is charged (p. 68.) with affirming, that two of the three Ministers who voted along with the parties—had no right to vote. And upon what ground are they so charged? It is just because they had said of these two,—that “one had never been in Synod before, and another had never been present at any judicial examination of the subject in question.” But this was only an affirming, on the matter,—that they did not properly exercise their right of voting, when exercising it blindly; especially in voting against any judicial examination of the subject at that time!

2. He runs out in a high rant of calumny against the Synod (p. 68. 69. 73.),—upon the case of their reckoning about the thirteen members (three Ministers and ten Elders), who concurred with seven parties (six Ministers and one Elder); in voting the second resolution. He says that, according to their reckoning, “all the Elders in general were disqualified,—denied to be real voters: eight Ministers deprived of a right of voting; and the eleven voting Elders declared doubly incapable; both as wanting knowledge by Mr Moncrieff’s protest, and as wanting a right by Mr Mair’s.—How does the list stand, after all these reductions? Twenty-three protesting anti-burghers, against one,” (viz. one of the three Ministers who voted with the par-

*p. 49, 55, 66.
ties, one) “qualified voting burgher!—the twenty votes which the burghers reckoned real and good, are now reduced to—one.—How did these twenty-three behave on that occasion? They first protested, then withdrew, and afterwards triumphed over the contemptible twenty voters; telling the world that they made few more than a third part of the members present, and not so many as themselves. Generous! heroic! unparalleled magnanimity!”

But what occasion or provocation had he, for all this insolence and abuse? Had the Synod any need to take such a way of reducing votes, for the support of their cause? or was there even the smallest appearance of their taking it?—None at all.

Six of these eight voting Ministers had no right of voting, to be deprived of; being directly parties upon the question. With regard to the other two of them,—not a mouth was opened against their right of voting, but only against their blind exercise of that right; as hath been explained, on the last particular.—One of the voting Elders had no right to vote, being a party. And with regard to the other ten,—not their right, but their blind exercise of it (as in the case of the above two Ministers) was ever quarreled: And that any protests then taken imported their wanting a right, is a most groundless reproach; as will be particularly explained afterwards.—Thus, instead of reducing the parties to one concurring voter, they have always been allowed the whole thirteen; as real voters, who had a full right to vote,—however wrongly they exercised it. How base then is the Surveyor’s calumnious rhapsody on this subject?

3. He lays the Synod under a most calumnious accusation, in the following words (p. 82.), viz. “The antiburgers—suppressed the light that might have arisen from reading the reasons of protest and answers: Both at Stirling in September 1746, by neglecting to have their answers ready; and at Edinburgh in April 1747, by refusing to have them read on any other terms than bringing the protesters to the bar. Are these things so, Gentlemen? Then be candid, be but just, (for generosity is neither asked, nor needful in the present case); and confess, that the suppression of light on your question was principally, I might have said wholly your own fault.”

It is really strange, that a man could so far prostitute his character,—in arguing after this manner: But what expedients will not one be driven to, in a desperate cause?

The reasons of protest having been given in about eight weeks, the Committee could not meet upon them (amidst the throng of Sacramental occasions) till a few days before the Synod in September 1746: And, when they saw the desperate strain of the reasons,—they demurred about making answers; without essay-
ing, in the first place, some other method of accommodation*. And this, according to him, was one suppression of light!

What was the other†?—In the course of reasoning on the 9th of April 1747, when a hearing of the reasons and answers was still urged; one of the protesters (without contradiction by the rest) did indeed propose to yield unto a previous reading of these‡. But upon what condition? Upon this only; that a mouth should not be opened concerning the same when read, till after an immediate voting of their question. And must the suppressing of light be charged wholly, or principally, or any way,—upon those who could not previously agree to such a mock-condition of obtaining what they urged; a condition for having no regard expressed to what light should arise from the answers upon being read,—as read under a positive consent for having that question voted immediately after, which they were pleading against the competency of having voted at all!

IV. The Surveyor proceeds in the same course, with regard to the second resolution,—what he calls the transmission,—or the vote which the protesters violently carried upon their question. And,

1. He writes as follows (p. 62.), *viz.* "The point to be determined on the 9th of April, in the regular order of business, was not—Whether the Burgess-oath was sinful, or not? Nor, Whether the sentence in April 1746, condemning it, was right or wrong?—But the precise object of their deliberation was, [Whether the said sentence, condemning the Burgess-oath, should be remitted to the presbyteries and sessions; that they might give their opinion about making that sentence a term of communion to ministers and Christians for the future? or, should the said sentence be made a term of communion to ministers and Christians immediately, without taking any opinion of either presbyteries or sessions on the matter?] The Burghers—were strenuous for the transmission of an overture, about making or not making the condemnatory sentence, a term of communion. They argued, that this measure would enable the Church to understand the matter in debate: If the sentence was found to be right, this measure would establish its credit; if wrong, it was a proper way to find out the error of it."

* It

*p. 42, 43. † p. 62.

‡ What he says (p. 63.), ["That the Burghers again and again in April 1747, to show their willingness to admit all proper light which could be offered, declared their desire to have the reasons and answers read; provided the only design of reading them, was to give light."]—is a piece of impudent forgery.
It is quite unnecessary, that any thing should be added in this place to what has been said already*,—concerning the nature of the second Resolution; and the vile outrage committed upon both reason and religion,—by pretending that the sentence in April 1746 could have any place, either as to the form or matter of it, among the novations which (according to some Acts of Assembly) should be remitted to inferior Judicatories. And there will be a proper occasion afterwards, for some further handling of this matter.

But a few words are necessary here,—for exposing the complicated misrepresentation, chicanery and nonsense of the passage now quoted; as intended for blackening the opposers of the second Resolution.

This Resolution was an express determining, that the sentence shall not now be made a Term of Communion; and that it shall not afterwards be so, till Presbyteries and Kirk-sessions give their judgment upon the subject: The Resolution determined it not to be so for the present; and these inferior Judicatories were to give their judgment, whether it should be so for the future.

But in all this, (according to the Surveyor),—there was no meddling with the question, whether that sentence was right or wrong: The pretended Synod’s judgment (as he teaches) against its being a term of communion for the present, did no way meddle; and the judgment of inferior judicatures about its being so for the future, was as little to meddle with the question about its being right or wrong. Its being made no term of communion, was therefore to be considered as leaving the door still open for supposing it to be right: That is, for supposing the Burgess-oath of the religious clause, (about which Seceders were to be left at freedom,—to swear or not swear it as they pleased, without any quarrel); even for supposing this tolerated oath to be indeed wholly inconsistent with the Secession-Testimony, and the oath of our Covenants!

And thus far the view given of the matter, however false in point of fact, (and however gross in point of principle),—is yet self-consistent. But behold the conclusion!

As to “the transmission of an overture, about making or not making the sentence a term of communion,”—it is said: “If the sentence was found to be right, this measure would establish its credit; if wrong, it was a proper way to find out the error of it.” But where is the sense or self-consistency of all this? Were not inferior judicatures to meddle only with the point, term of communion or not? What business could they have, according to the above view of the matter,—to meddle with the point, of the sentence being right or wrong? What occasion had they, or how could they presume to find it the one

or

* p. 58,—62.
or the other? —But the plain fact is, these two points cannot be got properly separated. Neither sense nor conscience can admit of judging, that the sentence should not be a term of communion; but in the way of judging it to be wrong. And of this troublesome truth the Surveyor could not rid himself, it now got in upon him; that the sentence, considering the special nature of it, must be a term of communion,—if it be right. There could indeed be no fair and honest question concerning it, but whether it be right or wrong?

2. He says (p. 66.),—“The question proposed to be referred by way of overture was not; whether the inferior judicatories would submit to the Synod’s sentence, as the sentence of a lawful superior court? To transmit such an overture, would have been unpresbyterian.” And is not the Surveyor then self-condemned?——For how could a question about dispensing with obedience to it*, or having “its operation suspended,” (which he owns [p. 48.] to be the meaning of making it not a term of communion),—how could this be any other than a question about submitting to it? Or how could a reference for their judging whether it was right or wrong, (which he owns, in the passage last considered, to have been the case),—how could this be any other than a reference for judging whether they should submit to it?—Most certainly the question referred was, “Whether the inferior judicatories would submit to the Synod’s sentence?” And it shall be referred to himself, whether he means only,—that it was not a question about submitting to “the sentence of a lawful superior court!”

3. He presumes (p. 63.) to dictate in this manner, viz. “The Burghers just concern for the edification of the diffusive body was such, that I believe they would not, and I am positive they ought not to have given up with the overture for a transmission, (even though they had been of opinion that the oath was sinful and dangerous); without previously remitting the condemnatory sentence as aforesaid.”—And is this “common sense,” “even her virgin voice?” Yes, says he, “I am positive:” “They ought not to have given up with the overture for a transmission,—without previously remitting;” that is, without previously not giving up with it!

But here is a supposition made, of the oath being “sinful and dangerous;” which must mean a supposition of the worst that the sentence found concerning it,—a supposition of its being wholly inconsistent with the Secession-Testimony, and the oath of our Covenants. Now the Surveyor thinks it a “just concern for the edification of the diffusive body,” and he is “positive” upon it,—even supposing the oath to be so “sinful and dangerous,” or supposing him to be really of this opinion concerning it; that yet the transmission ought to have been made: Or that it

*p. 58, 59, 60.
ought to have been turned over upon the discretion of inferior judicatories; whether Seceders, when avouching the Secession-Testimony by one solemn oath,—might not be allowed to swear also what was granted to be a contradictory oath, even granted to be an abjuring of that whole Testimony? And are the consciences of men to be debauched by such horrid doctrine; “in an age” (says he) “so enlightened as the present!”

V. Another calumny upon the Synod is thrown out (p. 67, 81, 86.),—in a most pitiful evasion that he makes, with regard to the fourth article of the libel; where it was said of the protesting brethren,—that in the second resolution, the aforesaid sentence was “still professedly by them left standing.” So that their said resolution was a “tolerating a known and acknowledged sin, even though peculiarly heinous.”* But, says he,—“To this day the Burghers have never seen any contradiction between the Burgess-oath and the oath of our Covenants;—the Burghers never allowed, that the Burgess-oath is really sinful:—But, Gentlemen-libellers! do you know, or do you conceal a known material fact, viz. that the Burghers always thought the decision unfair, unjust and erroneous; that they protested against it as such; and that their said protest, and the reasons of it, were never withdrawn? How then dare you say, that they left it professedly standing?”

It may well, indeed, be a question,—How he came by sufficient stock of assurance, for writing after this manner? As to the Synod,—they needed no more than that with which plain truth always sets up its face.

“They protested against the decision;” yea, “their said protest and the reasons of it were never withdrawn.” Very true: Yet what says all this to the dreadful inconsistency,—of having that decision, (though really cast loose into the hands of inferior judicatories, yet) still professedly left standing in the said Resolution; which Resolution was theirs?*—Will the Surveyor deny that it was theirs,—proposed, pushed and voted by them: So that what was done in it, was done by them? Or will he deny that, in this Resolution, the said decision was still professedly left standing,—and left so by them: When he has acknowledged, (as a little before),—that the said Resolution noway touched upon the question, “whether the sentence in April 1746 was right or wrong;” and so left that sentence, as to the truth and equity of it, altogether untouched?

Section IV. Of the Surveyor’s sophistical Reasonings and malicious Invectives against the Synod.

Upon a review of his abusive work, before any else had occasion to suggest the same,—the Surveyor could not help being

*p. 85, 86. † p. 59.
being struck, with some confounding apprehension of the truth concerning it: While he anticipates this objection (p. xxii.),—“that I have not fairly entered into the argument with the antiburghers.” And his first defence is what every criminal has in readiness; “I deny the charge;” Only adding, (what bewrays a sense of his having done them great injustice); “but as the field is open, they may do justice to themselves.” This privilege, indeed, he could not deprive them of: Nor can he justly blame the present use of it, however much at his expence.

He is so far from entering fairly into this argument, that there is not so much as one instance of his even appearing to do so. Such falsehoods and misrepresentations as have been considered, are dressed out by him in a continued strain of sophistical reasonings and malicious invectives: So that, through the whole course of his argument with the Associate Synod,—it is not upon any thing which they ever said or did, as fairly or impartially viewed, that he attacks them: But all his invective is founded on deceit and violence; as he helps out his disfiguring of their words and actions, by pretending to find out a rise thereof in evil thoughts and purposes of heart.

A method of writing in the present controversy, for which he expresses a fond regard (p. 90.), is that by which his antagonists may be “tormented,—and also terrified.” But as he needs not expect to get them put out of countenance by his audacious mockery; as little needs he suppose that they will be terrified by his scolding, or by his grinning at them in CAPITALS,—or by any supposed consequences of his abuse. And as to getting them tormented, he lies under an insuperable disadvantage; from its not being their own cause, but the cause of God and truth,—upon which he treats them with such provoking abuse. A mind incorrigibly debauched by errors and malignant prejudices, lies very open indeed for being tormented; when it cannot keep the light and flame of hated truth from flashing in upon it: But otherways, the torment must give place to a proper mixture of grief and just indignation.

Some instances of his writing in the aforesaid manner, are now to be considered; such as may give any material occasion, for doing justice to the cause against which he inveighs. And,

I. He charges the Synod (p. 14, 15.) as having expressly said, (for he distinguishes it by marks of quotation as their words),—with regard to burgesses their swearing the oath of the religious clause, in the period of Reformation; “their oath could only mean, that they were to go on in this work unto perfection.”——And he immediately adds: “I answer, that though this assertion has the authority of the antiburgher Synod to support it, it is overwhelmed with its own absurdity. For (1.) It supposes, that all the principles of church and state, employed in
“the cause of Reformation, were perfectly right; which is more than ought in modesty to be supposed. (2.) It supposes, that all the measures of church and state were calculated to advance Reformation-work to perfection; which cannot be granted concerning them all. (3.) It implies, that the swearer either engaged to approve what church and state should, in time coming, call an improvement of Reformation; which is implicit enough: Or he swore, that the church and state would pursue Reformation upon the principles they set out on.”

Now, the assertion here charged upon the Synod, from which he blackens them in such a manner,—is what they never made; neither in these words, nor in any words to the same purpose: They never uttered or entertained the wild notion, of the Burgess-oath having a prophetical sense; in the period of Reformation, or in any period whatsoever.

They have indeed reasoned, concerning their decision against a present swearing of the said oath,—that this can no way affect or condemn a swearing of it, in the late period of Reformation: And such reasoning, (out of which the Surveyor has coined the foregoing assertion, with others of the same monstrous nature)—will be considered afterwards. But nothing could be found supposed or implied in it all, to any other amount than this: That as Burgesses had no reason to scruple at a holding of communion with the established Church, in a period of Reformation; they had as little reason to scruple at a swearing of the said communion.

II. He says (p. 35, 36.),—“For many years I have reckoned it a great weakness in my Antiburgher friends; that they would undertake either to vindicate, or at least to extenuate, every measure taken in that period—between 1640 and 1650:——I have no notion of attempting to cover what was inconsistent with the word of God in that period.”——But where did they ever undertake or attempt, to vindicate or extenuate or cover in the manner here expressed? They have said, as to the view given of that period in the Judicial Testimony*; “It is not hereby intended to affirm,—that, under the above-mentioned period, there was nothing defective or wanting as to the beauty and order of the house of God: Or that there was nothing culpable in the administration.” And where have they retracted or contradicted that acknowledgment, to this very day?

But how can the Surveyor be reconciled, in this matter, with himself? “For” (says he, p. 27.) “the Antiburghers, notwithstanding all the warm regard they profess to our convened Reformation, dare only adopt it with the same limitations and exceptions.” Yes, as he now owns, they “make limitations and exceptions:” Yet not “the same” or such as he means; about things culpable in the profession and settlement of religion,

under this period of Deformation.—For they have made no limitations and exceptions about “the beauty and order of the house of God,” or about the profession and settlement of religion under that period of Reformation; but as to what might be found “defective or wanting” about the same: While it is only in the manner of managing the cause of a covenanted Reformation, or “in the administration” about the said profession and settlement,—that they have admitted of some things positively “culpable.”

And his insolent reasoning (p. 26, 27.), about “the great force and evidence of” (his pretended) “truth,”—as what “will, when permitted to shew itself, prevail over little prejudices and party-attachments:” This will never persuade them, nor any person free from little prejudices and party-attachments,—of its being “honest and self-consistent,” to reckon; that [“the manner of managing the cause of a covenanted Reformation,” or the administration in the reforming period], and [“the manner and circumstances of professing and settling the true religion in Scotland, at and since the Revolution”],—that these are things of the same, or of a parallel consideration. No: They cannot but reckon that the profession and settlement of religion, or the habitual and prevailing state of it, is one thing; and that the practical administration concerning the same, is really another thing;—so far, that some culpable steps may be found in this; and only something defective or wanting in the other.

It is therefore a vile imposition upon the Reader, though done as with “great force and evidence of truth,”—to pretend any parallel in the present case, and that one cannot be “honest and self-consistent” in refusing it: As if some faults of the administration could strike against swearing to the profession and settlement of religion, in the reforming period; as much as all the faults of the profession and settlement of it, can strike against swearing to the same in this period.—After all, he will never be able to acquit himself as “honest and self-consistent” in the “limitations and exceptions” which he admits of, about the profession and settlement of religion at and since the Revolution,—compared with his vindication of swearing thereto in the Burgess-oath: For his pretending as if it were not the profession and settlement, but only the true religion that this oath adopts,—is a mere bite put upon his Reader; as will be evidenced afterwards.

III. The Synod is further abused, on the head of their principles about the Revolution-Settlement; though they have espoused no other upon this head, than the original principles of the Secession: But the Surveyor makes no bones of turning these to their reproach; even while pretending (p. 40.), that he and his party, as Seceders, “have uniformly kept on their first ground,—the original measures of the Secession!” And,

1. He
1. He says (p. 20.),—“They tell us, that the Revolution-Settlement of religion is merely a political one; and only in compliment to the inclinations of the people.” But this is only his malicious construction of what they have told concerning Presbyterian Church-Government, (which the Parliament was pleased to mention, in the Act of Settlement, as a different thing from the true reformed Protestant religion),—that this was settled from a regard to the inclinations of the people.

2. He charges them (p. 36.), with “extravagant liberties,—in forcing a bad construction on almost every thing which relates to the Revolution-church.” Yet what construction have they ever put on any of these things, beyond what lies in the Judicial Testimony? But such is the extravagant liberty which he takes of sacrificing that Testimony to the cause of Burgess-oaths.

3. It had been said, in the Acknowledgment of sins,—that “the General Assembly, 1690, sat down upon the above Civil Establishment;” that is, as expressed in the Judicial Testimony, “did sit down under the shadow of the above Civil Establishment.” And this had been said, as a narration of fact; the evil there complained of not lying in these words abstractly, but as connected with the words immediately following,—which will be expressed by and by.—But the Surveyor gives it this malicious turn (and with marks of quotation, p. 20.), as the matter of their complaint; “That the Church at the Revolution sat down on the basis of this imperfect, Erastian settlement of the Scotch Parliament;” Adding,—“if this was really the case, she can scarce be called the Church of the living God;” And affirming (p. 21.), as if it were the contrary of what they say,—“that the Revolution-church sat down on the foundation of revealed truth.” But what a height of spite or of ignorance was requisite, with regard to the Synod and the Secession-cause, to put the man upon this way of arguing and constructing: As if they had taught the contrary,—or taught that the Revolution-church laid aside the Bible; putting the Parliament into the place of Christ, and the Act of Settlement into the place of the Gospel!

   However, even taking it as they have said,—that the Revolution-church “did sit down under the shadow of the above Civil Establishment;” he will yet find fault. For (says he, p. 21, 22.), “pray why should the Church refuse the offered favour?—The operation of all Laws, Statutes, Ordinances and Proclamations, in so far as they were prejudicial to what had been rescinded and condemned, was suspended and rendered ineffectual. And I am persuaded the Apostolic Church, which was obliged to be satisfied with much less indulgence, would have thankfully embraced such an open door of opportunity to serve the Lord.—I should be glad then to know, why the

   “Revolution-
“Revolution-church must be so criminal, for improving the day of her merciful visitation.”——But one might be as glad to know, why the Surveyor would palm such a thing upon the Associate Presbytery or Synod: As if they had found fault with the Parliament, for putting a period to the persecution; and with the Church, for embracing deliverance from persecution! Was there any shadow of a foundation for all this, in the complaint which they really made; that the sitting down under the shadow of the above Civil Establishment, was “without remonstrating against what was defective in the same?”

IV. In a defiance to self-consistency as well as truth, he upon the matter charges the Synod (p. 17, 18.) with the very reverse of the imputation last considered; even with the grossest Erastianism: “They allow the civil magistrate” (says he) “a power to judge of doctrine, worship and discipline, by the word of God; and to put a negative on the practices of Church-members, and even on her judicial decisions, when they respectively depart from that word.” And what evidence does he offer for this abominable falsehood? Merely the following reference, which he immediately adds to the above words; “Westminster Confession, chap. xxiii. § 3.”——This is not the proper place, for vindicating that passage of our Confession; which he might have as well charged with Mahometanism. But the thing particularly observable here, is,—that he charges such a principle upon the Associate Synod, and as one of their distinguishing principles; merely from their adherence to the Westminster Confession. Strange! If there be any thing wrong in this Confession, must they bear all the blame! Is it become a mere Antiburgher-book! Yes indeed, according to his way of proving the charge: It must no longer be considered as containing the principles of the Surveyor and his party, nor of the Revolution-church, nor of any other denomination in the world; but only (as he expresses it) “the principles of the Antiburghers!”——And how then can he refer to that book, for the meaning of true religion in a Burgess-oath?

But he seems to be hardened against both shame and sense, in the desperateness of his opposition to the Synod. He thinks it not enough to load them with error in the present case, but he must have them plunged into self-contradiction or absurdity; and all this, at the expence of landing himself in absurdity and nonsense.

It must be granted to him,—that the above principle, charged upon the Synod, makes the Church subordinate to the State. Yet, in the same page, he represents this as one part of a “general principle” which they proceed upon; “That the Church and the State are co-ordinate powers.” But (says he, beside a charge of its being false), “This principle is
“is absurd in itself.” And how does that appear? “The Church and the State” (says he) “have only an accidental connection; they have provinces entirely distinct; their laws and sanctions are totally different; they are not of the same extent; they have not the same subjects, nor the same purposes of their government respectively: How then can they be co-ordinate powers?”

Here indeed is a fine argument, for proving the absurdity and falsehood of a principle; an argument which itself possesses both these properties, in an imminent degree.—He might have allowed Church and State, at least sometimes and in some extent, to have the same subjects!

But otherways, the very reasons given by him why Church and State cannot be,—are just the reasons why they can be, and cannot but be co-ordinate powers; or, which is the same thing, not one of them subordinate to the other: So that, when versant about the same subjects or objects,—they are so in very different respects; with mutual independence.

The other part of that “general principle” which he says they proceed upon, and which he reckons equally false and absurd, is this; that these co-ordinate powers “should be jointly employed, in every step of Reformation-work.” Yet (says he) “They allow that many things are competent to the judgment of the church, which the magistrate has no right to meddle with: In such things, it seems, the Church is singly concerned; and the civil ruler is not a co-ordinate power.”—Well, it seems (if this man’s account of them were true), they know not what they would be at; they will have, and yet they will not have the State to be jointly employed with the Church, in every step of Reformation-work! And, it seems, he as little knows what he would be at; only that he would be at every thing worse than another about them: While, for the sake of abusing them, he has committed such an abuse upon his mother-tongue,—as to take co-ordinate and conjunct for convertible terms, or just the same thing; which certainly no body ever did before him,—though he brazens out the matter in the passage referred to, by putting whole lines of it into CAPITALS.

The scope of such jargon about Church and State, and the monstrous conclusions drawn by him from the above “general principle” for which he abuses the Synod,—may be considered in another place. The point he drives at, (and in such a manner, as if clearing and confounding were also just the same thing),—is briefly this; to get all State-behaviour, good or bad, about the Christian religion, cast out of all regard among Christians: But alas! He cannot get it cast out of the Burgess-oath.

V. The Synod undergoes a deal of virulent abuse, with regard to former contendings for the cause among their hands,—in September 1746, and in April 1747. As,

1. When
1. When speaking of that scandalous question, which was proposed and pushed by the protesters against the decision April 1746,—about its being a term of communion; the Surveyor proceeds as follows (p. 47, 49, 51, 61, 83, 85, 94, 101.), viz. “By this vote” (in September 1746, for a delay), “which was proposed and carried by the Antiburghers, the question was adopted; and made the Synod’s business at their next meeting.—As a faithful historian I must observe, that the Antiburghers contributed one side to that previous vote,” (on April 8th 1747). “Even the Antiburghers—acknowledged the constitutional propriety of the overture for a transmission; by joining in the previous vote on Wednesday, April 8th 1747.—It is very hard indeed, that the Antiburghers would first allow the question about the transmission to be voted; and then censure the Burghers, for voting upon it according to their light and conscience.—The question the Antiburghers had helped to bring on the field.—The Antiburghers allowed, in September 1746 and April 8th 1747, that it was lawful and regular to vote this question.—They did not barely permit, but directly allow (what they reckon) a most criminal question to be voted.—The sin of the Antiburghers was, on their own principles, peculiarly heinous indeed: For they neither used proper means to prevent the Burghers giving a scandalous and deeply criminal vote; nor forbore to countenance what they knew and acknowledged to be a sin peculiarly heinous; whereas the Burghers neither knew, nor could honestly acknowledge any sin in the vote they carried.—If it was unlawful, then the Antiburghers, to use their own words*, did exercise the pretended power of tolerating a known and acknowledged sin, even though peculiarly heinous; by allowing the said question to be voted.”

But could a faithful historian write in this manner? Could his doing so consist with any degree of his boasted impartiality or candour, fairness or modesty? And what a poor defence can he find, what a pitiful relief from any galling of conscience about the course of his party,—in committing such an outrage upon ingenuity and discretion, for dragging in others to a participation of the guilt?—The naked facts, in the case of those whom he thus abuses, are briefly as follows.

Though it was only by degrees, that they came forward to a full and cleanly measure of contending against the question afore-mentioned; yet from first to last, they were always managing an opposition to it. They could never be prevailed with to vote upon it, or to give any consent for having it voted; but were all along insisting to the contrary.—In September 1746, after earnest contendings against the question as it then stood for many hours, they got it put off by a delay: Such a delay as the friends of it then protested to be,—not an adopting, but a material re-

jecting

* p. 85.
jecting of it*. On the 8th of April 1747, they contended further against that scandalous question as then formed,—when endeavouring, by means of an opposite question for a previous vote, to have it altogether thrown out; (in which they were over-powered, merely by the parties assuming judgment): While their opposite question was stated and urged, in a plain and professed contradiction to any constitutional propriety of the transmission aimed at. Next day, they proceeded in the way of most solemn protestation against it,—as a question utterly incompetent: Using all proper means, in long reasonings with repeated protestations,—to prevent the friends of that question from rushing in to a vote upon it. And the utmost favour they ever shewed to it, was this: That, in a way of utterly refusing to vote upon it,—they for a time only endeavoured to have it voted quite away; before they came the length of endeavouring to have it absolutely protested out of doors.

After comparing what is presently said, with the fuller representation formerly made of this whole affair†,—let the reader now judge for himself; what sort of a conscience could permit a man to charge them with having adopted that question, with having helped to bring it on the field,—with allowing that it was lawful and regular to vote the same! What sort of a conscience could permit him to charge upon them an allowing, directly allowing that question to be voted,—with all the malicious amplification of this charge; merely because the Resolution for voting it was violently carried against them,—by the parties assuming to vote, in opposition to the fundamental constitution of the Court!

He indeed has the assurance to say (p. 48.); “It does not appear, that any of the Antiburghers were so ridiculous as to insinuate by a dissent,—that the protesters against the sentence condemning the Burgess-oath, must be viewed as parties in this question,’”—till after the Resolution for a vote upon it was made. It is true, they were not so ridiculous as to insinuate such a thing by a dissent,—either before or after that Resolution: For they had as much sense as to know, that a dissent could be only from a deed of the Court,—not from the claim of parties. But did not he know that, before the said Resolution was made, (even more than half-a-year before‡),—they argued much for having these protesters viewed as parties: Though it was not till next day, yet before the vote was driven,—that they solemnly protested to the same purpose?

2. The conduct which they found themselves shut up unto on the 9th of April 1747, when the rupture of the Synod took place, furnishes the Surveyor (p. 50,—73.) with a subject for the highest exertion of his invective powers. Had he ingenuously taken things, as he could not but know they really were,—

* p. 45, 46. † p. 43,—55, 62,—68. ‡ p. 45.
he might have used his freedom more excusably, in trying to expose them: But as he proceeds in a high strain of virulence and derision, upon such falsehoods and misrepresentations as have been already detected,—with a violent abusing of their hearts as well as actions; he must remain without excuse.

Their conduct is represented by him, under the notion of “a preconcerted plan of military operations;” and he carries through a drollery upon the subject, in terms of that nature: While the effects of divine wisdom and goodness, in the Lord’s condescending to make darkness light before them only from step to step,—are reproached, as the preconcerted stratagems of their hostile plan. He finds them “altogether ridiculous,” in affecting what never entered into their minds; to imitate the conduct of the Associate Presbytery, in the affair of the Declination.” He finds them actuated by a defect “of honest zeal;” having a “good-natured, humane and Christian disposition,”—as an object against which “they resolved to play all their artillery:” and he finds them destitute of all hope in God; that their hope proceeded entirely from the opinion they had of” (his ridiculous figment) “the pacific sentiments of the Burghers.”

But it is needless to insist further on that subject: As a sufficient antidote against all his venom concerning it, may be found in the preceding part of this volume*.

3. With regard to that vote by which the second Resolution was made, he says (p. 70.),—“They were determined, if possible, not to allow that more than one of the Burgher-side had a right to vote: (Acts and Proceedings, p. 17, 18.): Or however, that not more than three could be real voters, (Introduction to Acts and Proceedings, p. 9.); while they artfully insinuate, that twenty-three were previously protesters against the vote altogether, ibid. A downright imposition!—I appeal to the common sense of all readers, whether the twenty-three as there mentioned will bear any other grammatical application than to real voters.”

That the first part of the above passage is a most calumnious misrepresentation, has been sufficiently manifested on the third article of the last section: As they never made nor meant the smallest insinuation, against the right of thirteen of the twenty voters; though they refused that the other seven, being directly parties, had any right to vote.

In prosecution of the same invective, a very singular attack is here made upon a passage of the Introduction referred to.—But taking the Surveyor’s whole account of the matter, (and the above quotation gives it entire;) abstracting also from the disingenuous,—of fixing upon all his Brethren, what was said by the writer
of that Introduction: It will certainly exceed the powers “of all readers,” to find one grain of “common sense” in what he now says; as to any reason for these charges,—that “they artfully insinuate,” and commit “a downright imposition?” Can it be an artful insinuation, to make a plain expression of a fact which was never controverted?

And that “all readers” may be able to judge, upon the appeal he makes to them about “a downright imposition!” (which their “common sense” cannot possibly do, from his account of the matter); the passage of the Introduction referred to shall also be given entire, viz. “As neither Moderator nor Clerk were actually officiating in the matter, none but twenty (among near sixty members present) voted in it; seven of whom were parties: And thus there were only thirteen men (according to the style of the Reasons, p. 115), and but three of them ministers, real voters; while twenty-three were previously protesters against the vote altogether, both as to the matter and manner of it.”

And now, let judgment pass upon the “appeal to the common sense of all readers;” whether the above passage any way seems to say, that not more than three could be real voters? Whether, according to any known rules of grammar,—real voters “will bear any other grammatical application” than to thirteen men; of whom three only were ministers? And “whether the twenty-three, as there mentioned, will bear any other grammatical application” than to protesters; without any such nonsense, as making the protesters against the vote altogether to be the real voters?—It is impossible that a reader can smell out downright or any sort of imposition, in all this,—or can imagine, as the Surveyor does, that “the above account must be highly disingenuous;” till prejudice, or something else, have jumbled his brain.

He gives another turn of the like treatment (p. 70, 71.) to the writer of that Introduction,—for having “insinuated” that silent members were not to be accounted of, as on the side of the second Resolution. He reckons that the Introductor did “disgrace their acts and proceedings, by such insinuations;” As inconsistent with what had been said about the silent members, when the sentence took place in April 1746; that they “did, by their silence, acquiesce in the sentence when passed.” And, in comparison with that former case, he says,—“Why should not the silent members on the latter, be viewed in the same light?”—Yet where is the comparableness? Though it be essential to a court, that silent members be reckoned over to the side of the majority of acting members; does this say, that they were to be reckoned over to the side of the minority, who pretended to carry
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the said Resolution? But this matter has been sufficiently explained in another place*

VI. The Surveyor greatly exercises his abusive virulence, with regard to that Restoration of the Associate Synod which the Lord did mercifully bring about; and particularly, as to their condemning of the second Resolution. What invidious constructions he forces upon their words in this case, for giving play to his derisive faculty, are unworthy of any particular notice: But it is proper to take some account of his most injurious dealing about matters of fact, upon the head now mentioned.—Enough has been said, in the preceding part of this examination (on the fourth article of the second section),—about his ignorant yet insulting reproaches; as if they had taken upon them to act in the capacity of judges where they were parties, at the aforesaid Restoration. Moreover,

1st. He says (p. 56, 57.), and he grins it out in capitals: “MR THOMAS MAIR’S DECLARATION AND PROTESTATION IS MADE THE BASIS OF THE WHOLE FABRIC OF THEIR CONSTITUTION AND FELLOWSHIP THROUGHOUT.” Accordingly he adds (p. 91.),—“That meeting sat down, not upon the word of God, but according to Mr Thomas Mair’s declaration and protestation.”——And what reason had he for such doctrine concerning them? Only this; that the matter found, by their first act, was said to be,—according to the foresaid declaration and protestation†. These are the words from which he draws such inferences,—even from a simple mention of a following thing, as in a state of conformity and connexion with a former thing. Were he saying, that he preaches according to his notes; it would be every whit as fair and candid, to put this construction upon his words,—that his NOTES are made the basis of the whole fabric of the gospel, and of the salvation of souls, under his ministry in London!

Their first ACT, asserting the constitution and rights of the Associate Synod, was also said to be according to previous contendings for the same. But then and afterwards, especially in April 1749,—they confessed some staggerings and failings to have taken place, for a time, in these previous contendings.——Now, what conclusion does the Surveyor make (p. 93, 94.) from all this? It is; that “the Antiburgher-constitution, by their own confession, was—precisely—according to their previous defective and sinful contendings:” Upon which he derides them, by an appeal to the Reader; “Whether the Antiburgher-constitution, by their own confession, was a great deal better than the Revolution-settlement.” And with regard to a question which they added to the Formula‡, he says; that according to their sense of the Burgess-oath, “This engagement” (required by the said question) “is a bond of iniquity;—to adhere invariably

*p. 65, 66. † p. 73. ‡ p. 79, 80.
“riably to their Synod, precisely as it is presently constituted according
to their previous defective and sinful contendings.”——As to his
profane banter, in the place referred to, about their defective and sinful
contendings; he shall be left to the future recognizing of his own
conscience. It may be sufficient here to observe; that the said
constitution and question, against which he so inveighs, had no respect
to previous contendings for the constitution and rights of the Associate
Synod,—but merely considered as such, and so far only as they were
such: While any sinful defect thereof for some time, had been by that
time supplied; and so was not then of any effect, nor a matter of any
continued existence*. But, according to this Surveyor’s impartiality
and candour,—there must never be any acknowledgment or account
made afterwards, of any contendings which the Lord has enabled to
make for his cause and interest; because these containings, however far
brought to a proper issue,—must always have had some sinful defect in
their beginnings: They must therefore be left to die along with that
sinful defect,—and be buried in perpetual oblivion! No body must now
profess adherence or regard, to previous contendings for the
Reformation-interest; because it was only by degrees, that they were
brought to a proper bearing! Farewell then to all promised uttering of
the memory of the Lord’s great goodness, in what he works for us;
because he works it not all at once!

2dly. Of the twenty voters upon the second Resolution, the
opposers thereof did indeed deny seven (six Ministers and one Elder) to
have any right for voting; because they were directly parties upon the
subject. But they are most injuriously charged (p. 69.)—with
“denuding all members of a right to vote, who had not been present at
the judicial examination of the question.” By which means, it is said,
they took off other two Ministers and ten Elders of the above twenty
voters; leaving just “one qualified voting Burgher!” Yet (as hath been
explained on the third article of the last Section), it is absolutely
false,—that they denuded any one of a right to vote, on the account
which he mentions.—And what was all the ground upon which he
proceeded in this charge? Mr Moncrieff’s protestation did indeed bear,
that “many members were never present at any judicial examination of
the subject of the question; and some have been complaining, that they
are precluded from necessary ac-

“quaintance

* The Lord often makes the failings of men subservient to the purposes of
his own wisdom and goodness. In the present case, a clearing up of duty for an
high enough opposition was beautifully ordered,—so as to coincide with the height
of the course opposed.
“quaintance therewith*;” But the Surveyor, for a ground of his above charge, has committed a downright forgery upon that protest (p. 68.); by adding these words of his own, with marks of quotation,—“should not have judged in this affair.”

A like charge is laid against them (p. 73.),—of “partiality to their own ten Elders†, whom they sustained as real protesters before a vote; wherein sixteen other Elders are denied to be real voters.” And here, again, the falsehood is repeated; for they never denied any Elder to be a real voter, except one who was a party.—They indeed looked upon the Elders, for the reason above-mentioned, as then in no proper capacity to exercise their right of voting; when unacquainted with the subject of the question. But this very thing did put them into the most proper capacity for protesting,—against forcing a vote, in the way of refusing to let them know about what!

3dly, The Synod is set forth (p. 68, 69, 73.) as guilty of still a deeper crime, with regard to Elders.—Mr Mair’s declaration and protestation‡ is represented as “affirming in plain terms, that Ministers (and not Elders) are the proper judges in such questions as the present:” And so they are charged with “denying Elders a right to vote in Synod, upon a question which was to determine one of the express conditions of religious communion.” Now, this being one of the Surveyor’s high topics,—it may be proper to bring it down, by the following particulars,

1. Mr Mair’s declaration and protestation did indeed bear this clause, viz. “Beside a considerable number of Elders, the majority of Ministers in this meeting, who are the proper judges in a controversy of faith and case of conscience, and who could be judges in the present controversy||, have been all along at this meeting contending for the proper business and duty of the Synod, in opposition to the contrary torrent.” Now, there was not a word expressed here,—about Elders being judges or not: And when Ministers were called the proper judges in a controversy of faith and case of conscience, this did not absolutely exclude Elders from being judges in such matters; it meant at most,—that they were not so, except in an improper or secondary sense of the word. It still allowed them to be judges in such matters, by way of assisting and concurring with the majority of Ministers,

* p. 53.
† One of their Elders (making eleven) had then gone out: And instead of sixteen, there could be no more (even according to his own account in another place) than thirteen other Elders; one of whom was a voting party, and two silent, p. 49, 65.
‡ p. 55.
|| That is, as it was expressed in the Act condemning the second Resolution,—“who were not parties in the matter.”
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Ministers, (as their office is properly for assisting them); but not unto an overbearing of them in these matters: Or, it only refused that the doctrine of the Church might be judicially determined and settled by a prevalence of Elders; over the belly of the majority of Ministers, and as well over the belly of all Ministers,—though to these only the Lord Jesus has committed the key of doctrine.

2. The Synod was no way singular, in this view of matters.—In February 1597, (a time when, as Mr Calderwood says, “This Kirk was now come to the greatest purity that ever it attained unto, so that her beauty was admirable to foreign Kirks”); a question having been proposed by King James, about who “should have vote in Synodical Assemblies:” Some Brethren, appointed out of every Presbytery of the Synod of Fife, resolved thus in their answer to it;—“Such as have commission from particular Sessions of congregations, have vote; except in matters of doctrine, wherein only they that labour in the word may vote and judge.”——The famous reformed Church of France determined as follows, in the 6th article of the 3d chapter of her Discipline: “Elders may well assist, and give their opinion; but to Ministers and Pastors the decision of doctrine is principally reserved, and to Doctors of Divinity duly called to their charges.”—And afterwards (in their National Assembly 1598), they determined; that “when there is a question of the judgment of doctrine, the decision thereof belongs to the Ministers only.”

3. A contrary view of matters cannot consist with our Reformation-standards.—Our Second Book of Discipline teaches, concerning Elders; that “their principal office is, to hold assemblies with the Pastors,—for establishing good order, and execution of discipline.” And our Form of Church-Government lays down this, as comprehending the whole business of Elders; that they “are to join with the Minister in the government of the Church.”—Can it consist with, can it fall within the compass of these articles; that a formal judgment of doctrine, and such as may (by number) overbear the judgment of Ministers, should belong to the office of Elders?

4. The primary rule, in this matter, is the Holy Scripture: Which expressly confines the Elders now spoken of to Ruling or Government; distinguishing them from those other Elders, who also labour in the word and doctrine*.—And the Surveyor used a scandalous freedom with his Bible; when he presumed (p. 65.), and that upon the authority of his own mere say,—to confine that labouring to the pulpit: Thus giving a manifest contradiction, or at least correction to the Holy Spirit,—as if all Elders were on a level, with regard to judicial labouring in the word and doctrine.

5. In

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* Rom. xii. 8. 1 Cor. xii. 28. 1 Tim. v. 17.
5. In conformity to the Holy Scripture and our subordinate standards,—the Judicial Testimony bears an express declaration and assertion, concerning the “Key of doctrine;” that it is “for expounding and preaching the word, and determining controversies of faith according to the Scriptures*.” Which necessarily means, that the key of doctrine is for being exercised both in preaching and judging; that the preaching and judging exercises of it, in point of right or title, are conjunct, utterly incapable of division,—so as the one cannot be competent to any person without the other; and that the judicial determination of doctrinal controversies belongs to these, and these only, to whom the key of doctrine is committed by the Lord Jesus. And exclaiming, therefore, against the Synod, in the case now under consideration,—belongs to the present apostasising from that Testimony.

6. The afore-mentioned passage of Mr Mair’s declaration and protestation, made on the 9th of April 1747,—was laid in a conformity to the general view which he and his concurring brethren had agreed upon in the morning of that same day†.——It could not then be known, what course the generality of Elders might take; or whether some face of a majority, beside the parties, might not be got over to the second Resolution,—if the vote for it should be got driven. But, as they saw that the majority of all the Ministers, excluding parties, was in a state of opposition to such a course: It was their settled principle, that this majority could not justly, or consistently with the proper form and privileges of the Court,—be overborn in the cause before them, considering the doctrinal nature of it; by a concurrence of any number of Elders, with the minority of Ministers on the other side. They were therefore quite clear, as to the justice and necessity of the claim made by the said declaration and protestation; upon the grounds therein expressed: Whatever semblance of a majority, by the help of Elders, could be found on the other side; while such a majority could not really sustain the character of the Associate Synod, in that circumstanced case.

But the matter was so ordered in holy providence, beyond any previous apprehension; that their claim was not left to depend, merely on the aforesaid ground. For even abstracting from it altogether, or from any different consideration of Ministers and Elders; supposing they were all to be considered on a level, as judges in a controversy of faith and case of conscience: Yet their aforesaid claim had a sufficient ground, in the general nature of the court; while they proved to be the majority, not only of all acting members,—but even of all members, abstracting from direct parties in the cause‡.

7. The Surveyor quite mistakes and perverts the matter, when he represents them as having then claimed,—“That Ministers

“(and

“(and not Elders) are the proper judges in such questions as the present; a question which was to determine one of the express conditions of religious communion.”——They were speaking about judges in a controversy of faith and a case of conscience: By which they did no way mean (as he supposes) the question then pushed, unto the second Resolution. They contended against that question, as utterly incompetent for any judgment in the Court; as a question in which neither Ministers nor Elders could be proper judges: While, instead of being a controversy of faith and case of conscience; it was a question for debauching both faith and conscience, with regard to the matter properly in dependence.—The former decision then deceitfully struck at, as it should have been fairly examined in the reasons of protest and answers.—this they insisted upon, as the only matter then properly in dependence; and this only they were referring to, as a controversy of faith and case of conscience.

4thly, He tries also (p. 64, 65. 73.) to engage Kirk-sessions against the Synod, as a common enemy to their rights and privileges.—He charges them with “denying Kirk-sessions a right to cognosce upon any matters of truth or error, sin or duty.” He brands them as having “laid down this unpresbyterian absurd position,”—of denying “that any reference in a point of doctrine or case of conscience, ought to be made to Kirk-sessions.”—And then he adds; “Kirk-sessions are either Courts of conscience, or they are not Church-courts;—if Kirk-sessions should not determine on truth or error, sin or duty, it is full time they were abolished;—such rules and constitutions as are made about the order and government of the Church must be matters of truth and duty, when they are agreeable to the word of God; and matters of error and sin, when they are not agreeable to it;—If matters of Church-order, government and discipline, are as different from matters of truth and duty as the Antiburgher Synod affirms (in their acts and proceedings, p. 121, 122.); these who pour contempt on all Church-order, government and discipline, have at least this much to say for themselves; that they neither err nor sin by doing so.” And thus the Synod is brought in, by a most disingenuous and calumnious rhapsody,—as patronizers and justifiers of all who pour contempt on all Church-order, government and discipline.

But what reason have they given for all this? Even none at all.—They never affirmed or imagined, that matters of Church-order, government and discipline, are any way different from matters of truth and duty. They never questioned, that such rules and constitutions as are made about the order and government of the Church,—must always be matters of truth and duty, or of error and sin; must always be so as to the substance, or at least as to the circumstances of such rules and constitutions: For
they know nothing that the Church has ado,—but about truth and error, sin and duty. They never offered to refuse, that kirk-sessions are courts of conscience; as they know no business that any kirk-courts have, but with matters of conscience. And they never made the smallest appearance of an absolute denying,—that kirk-sessions should determine in truth or error, sin or duty; that they have a right to cognosce upon such matters; and that references may be made to them, in points of doctrine or cases of conscience*: While it is their business, to deal with those under their charge,—about maintaining truth and opposing error, as well as about performing duty and abstaining from sin; and so their business to determine on truth or error, sin or duty,—as found in the principles or practices of their people; thus cognoscing upon and regulating their behaviour, in points of doctrine and cases of conscience: But still proceeding, upon all these matters,—only in a conformity and subordination to the public rules and constitutions of the Church-state to which these kirk-sessions belong.

What then is the Synod’s crime, with regard to kirk-sessions? Nothing other than this; that, in the place of their proceedings referred to, they teach as follows: “Kirk-sessions are not proper judges concerning doctrine,—about what is truth or error,—about what is sin or present duty;” in controversies of faith and cases of conscience.—Thus, they have no way refused kirk-sessions to be proper judges concerning doctrine; in the sense of dealing with the principles, as well as practices of their people,—according to the public rules and constitutions laid down from the Lord’s word, in the doctrinal standards of the Church-state: While their doing so, on any occasion, properly belongs to the exercise of the key of government and discipline; as the same is to be exercised, though not in making determinations,—yet in receiving and supporting the determinations made about what is truth and error, sin and duty†. But they refuse kirk-sessions to be proper judges concerning doctrine,—in the sense

*Such a reference the Synod made to sessions, in September 1745. P. 128.

† In the Judicial Testimony (vol. I. p. 159.), “The Keys of Government and Discipline” is asserted to be “for preserving the beauty and purity of the Church; and for inflicting of Church-censures upon the erroneous, the scandalous and obstinate: That she may be preserved or purged from such errors in principle, or such scandals in practice, whereby she may be in danger of being corrupted.” In this sense, the exercise of government and discipline (competent to kirk-sessions as well as superior judicatories),—is versant about matters of truth and error, of sin and duty.”
sense of making, altering or adding to these public rules and constitutions; by passing doctrinal decisions “about what is truth or error, about what is sin or present duty,”—in matters of public controversy. They allow kirk-sessions a judgment about what is the acknowledged doctrine of the Church; for a maintaining of it, severally, in their congregations: But refuse them a judgment about what should be the acknowledged doctrine of the Church; for a decision of controversies on that head.—And is this an “unpresbyterian absurd position?” He deserves not the name of a Presbyterian who can say so, if he think as he says: While the reverse of this position is the very soul of independency; and is grossly subversive of all divine institution, about the keys of the kingdom of heaven,—by placing the decisive exercise, even the highest exercise of the key of doctrine, where the Lord Jesus never placed that key.

5thly, Some view has been taken already, of the reference made to Presbyteries and kirk-sessions by the second Resolution; and of the Surveyor’s misrepresentation concerning it: But it is proper, in this place, to take some further view of that matter.

He says, concerning the Synod (p. 64.) “They allege, that this sentence against the Burgess-oath was upon a doctrine of faith and a case of conscience, not about rules and constitutions of the Church; and therefore a reference of it was improper: Especially since [it belongeth to Synods and councils ministerially to determine controversies of faith, and cases of conscience; Westminster Confession, chap. 31. § 3.]. Ans. I am sorry the objectors stopped so short, in their quotation from the Confession of Faith: For the paragraph referred to affirms, that [it belongeth to Synods and councils to set down rules and directions for the better ordering of the public worship of God, and government of his Church]. It is plain, these words mean precisely the same thing that the binding rules and constitutions of the Church, in the foresaid Acts of Assembly” (about references to inferior Judicatories) “mean.”

But, instead of the mock sorrow which he professes in these words,—he has reason to be really sorry, for having made such a Lie upon them; as if they had “so stopped short, in their quotation from the Confession of Faith.” For as they quoted the first of the above passages from it, upon the fourth Article of the libel; so the other, which he charges them with overlooking,—had been as expressly quoted by them, in words at full length, upon the third Article.——And he is grossly mistaken, if he supposes that they looked upon the second part of the above quotation as striking against them. For while they reckoned that the first part of the decision struck at by the second Resolution, was upon “a controversy of faith and case of conscience;” so they considered the latter part of it, as belong-
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ing to the class of “rules and directions for the better ordering of the public worship of God and government of his Church.” And, under this view, they contended against the reference made of it; yet in a full consistency with the Acts of Assembly referred to.

He, indeed, has very odd reasoning to the contrary; the amount of which is: That, according to these Acts of Assembly,—a Synod “may transmit an overture concerning a controversy of faith, and a case of conscience;” as well as it may transmit an overture about “rules and directions for better ordering the public worship of God, and for the government of his Church.” And why? “The reason is” (says he,) “that it equally belongeth to Synods to set down the one, and to determine the other ministerially; according to the said Confession.”——Fine reasoning, truly; that if they may transmit an overture about any thing, they may as well transmit an overture about every thing which belongs to them.

But a gross abuse is committed upon these Acts of Assembly,—by pretending that they either appointed or allowed a transmission of overtures, about any controversy of faith and case of conscience; or yet about every case of the rules and directions mentioned.——They could only refer to overtures about matters of supposed prudential expediency: And it was most proper to enact, that Assemblies should not make “binding rules and constitutions of the Church” about such matters; without obtaining the more general consent of inferior Judicatories. But was this to be the case,—about matters turning directly on the point of what is truth or error, what is sin or duty? Were Assemblies, by such overtures about these things,—to say, upon the matter, to inferior judicatories; we will maintain such a truth or adopt such an error, we will injoin such a duty or allow such a sin,—just as ye shall think proper! What a horrid reproach upon these Assemblies, and their acts! Yet such, upon the matter, is the dreadful language, of the transmission made by the second Resolution.

And that the Surveyor’s construction upon these acts of Assembly is most abusive, scandalously inconsistent with their whole design,—is quite evident, from the practice of Assemblies. Not one instance can be given, of their having ever transmitted any overture, in conformity to these acts; upon any such case as the present. On the contrary, though the Assembly 1639 made an act for transmitting overtures to inferior judicatories; yet, in the year 1647 and 1648, they made no such transmission,—with regard to the Confession and Catechisms then established. Nor did they make any such transmission, in the year 1645,—with regard to the Directory for Public Worship, and the Form of Church-Government; though these were just two systems of

“rules
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“rules and directions for the better ordering of the public worship of God, and government of his Church:” But they were not such rules and directions as turned upon the point of supposed prudential expediency; and therefore not such as were to be transmitted, by way of overture, to inferior Judicatories.

But the Surveyor is still tenacious of the transmission made by the Second Resolution; however absurd it be, as well as sinful: And no wonder; for *his all* depends upon it, as to the present state of his religious profession.—“It would certainly” (says he, p. 61, 63.) “have been more proper, to have transmitted the question before a sentence had been passed: But as the immoderate warmth of the opposers of the Burgess-oath, would not allow them to listen to this motion, apprehending perhaps that such a measure would defeat their intentions; so the Burghers, I think with a sinful indulgence, yielded to their obstinacy, and dropped their overture.” Yet the Burghers are chargeable with no such sinful indulgence, having had no occasion for yielding to such obstinacy; because no such obstinacy did exist, there having been no such overture insisted on before the sentence*: So that this tale about obstinacy and indulgence, is all a fiction of his own brain.—“The sinful condescension of the Burghers to humour some people’s obstinacy, has been already confessed.” And so he acts the farce of a public repentance, in their name, for that imaginary sin; as influenced by a spirit of reproach against the Synod. “But though the most proper season for such a transmission was, by this means lost; yet—the reasons I have mentioned for doing it at last, rather than neglect it altogether, are unanswerable.”

Well, what are these unanswerable reasons? “(1) The sentence to be transmitted manifestly disturbed the peace of the Church, and made division.” A few protesters indeed laboured to make it do so; but with no probability of success: While it was properly their opposition, and their overture of transmission,—that disturbed the peace of the Church; what first made any division among the people. “(2) It was, in the purest sense of the word, a *novation*.” In a very pure sense, certainly: The novation of not allowing Seceders to swear contradictory oaths, by turns avouching and abjuring their witnessing professions! “(3) The sentence—was intended, by the promoters of it, to be a binding rule and constitution to the Church.” No doubt, a binding of Seceders to hold fast their profession; by requiring them, in order to their admission into the oath of the Bond for renewing our Covenants, to give up with a contradictory oath.

And are these the *unanswerable reasons*!——If there was any appearance of reason, it was only for reversing the sentence; so

* p. 311
as to turn the matter of it back into an overture, about whether it should be afterwards renewed. But what reason could be pretended, without an indignity upon reason; for transmitting the sentence itself—in an overture about whether it should be allowed, still continuing a sentence, to have any effect!

After all, the world is grossly abused,—by the noise which the Surveyor still makes, in behalf of that transmission; as if it had been really proposed for serving the purpose that it bears a face of. It was manifestly a mere temporary fetch, to serve the purpose of casting away the sentence from having any effect; that there might be no more of it. And the event has put this beyond all doubt: For now, after more than twenty-six years,—the world has never heard of the Surveyor’s Synod calling for any report, upon that transmission, from their Presbyteries or Sessions; or of these having ever taken it into consideration*.

6thly, The way is now prepared, for taking notice of a bold challenge which he gives to the Synod; with regard to their doctrine about Elders and Sessions.—“I hope” (says he, p. 65, 66.) “they do not believe and practise the doctrine they have delivered in writing.” But they want none of his charitable allowances in this matter, which only amount to a sneering way of defamation. “If they adhere to it” (which he needs not doubt of,) “I undertake to prove that their sentiments destroy the two cardinal pillars of Presbytery, viz. The judicial parity of all Elders, and the due subordination of Church-judicators.”

“This

*There is a mysterious passage upon this subject, in their Act of November 1753,—declaring (what they reckoned) the true scope and design of the Secession, p. 56. Speaking of the Synod’s Act about Burgess-oaths in April 1746, as passed without regard to what were called Barrier-acts,—they say, in a parenthesis (“for which, as well as for other weighty reasons, the Synod have condemned the said Act.”)

They “have condemned the said Act:” And so, as would seem, they could not rest in their transmission concerning it; but took a more summary way for making an end of it. At the same time, the people concerned are kept in the dark,—about any particulars of that condemnation, or of any trial in order thereto: Though common justice could not be done to the cause or them, without a public explanation of the whole. Moreover, (as they pretended to be the true Associate Synod,)—it was an odd style, to speak of having condemned their own Act; instead of having reversed, repealed, rescinded or annulled it.—After all (as the Surveyor is silent upon this head, in his history of their proceedings;) it is left doubtful if any thing more be meant, than their having materially condemned it by their transmission concerning it: And so, the said Act must be still lying among them,—in that absurd situation.
“This is no vain boast; I am truly sorry the talk is so very easy as it is.”—And so he again professes sorrow, a being truly sorry for a supposed advantage against the Synod; which every body else will believe him very glad of.

It must have been by some odd chance, that it struck him in the head to charge their doctrine with destroying “the due subordination of judicatories:” When that doctrine is just a defending of the said subordination; against his topsyturvy scheme, of subjecting decisions of Synods to the consultation and pleasure of inferior judicatories.

What he represents as “the two cardinal pillars of Presbytery” (supposing the first were as true as the second,) one might take for cardinal parts of Presbytery; reckoning divine authority and power to be rather the cardinal pillars of it.—Enough has been said about his second; and a few things may be added, about his first cardinal pillar of Presbytery.

The official parity of all teaching Elders, is indeed a main part of Presbytery; in opposition to the Episcopalian scheme. But such a notion as the judicial parity of all Elders, is certainly very new,—and a very odd candidate for any place, among either the pillars or parts of Presbytery; as yet utterly unknown, in the standards of any Presbyterian Church.

Those who are only Ruling Elders, have a seat in Presbyterian Judicatories; and are acknowledged to be in a state of parity with those who are also teaching Elders,—in all matters of ruling, or of government and discipline. Among the questions to be decided in those Judicatories, perhaps not one of a hundred is a question about doctrine: And as to questions about doctrine, it may not occur in one case of a hundred,—that the minority of ministers will be driving a scheme to bear down the majority of ministers, by the help of Elders. And when this singular case does not occur, there can be no impropriety in taking the votes of Ministers and Elders without any distinction; while the majority of the Ministers must still be on the side of the doctrinal decision: For, agreeably to Presbyterian principles, if agreeable to the rules of prudence,—an assisting or concurring vote may be taken from any Church-member who happens to be present; much more from such as are necessarily in the Court, equally concerned with Ministers in all its ordinary business. Yet, when the aforesaid singular case occurs, it is necessary to make a distinction; according to the radical distinction of offices.

But all such distinction is abolished, by the Surveyor’s unscriptural novation,—the judicial parity of all Elders: Which is not less absurd than unscriptural. For the highest exercise of the key of doctrine, lies in judicial ascertaiments of doctrine; as it must be a higher exercise of the pastoral office, to determine what should be taught,—than to teach what is determined: And what must then
then be the import of that novation?—The ruling Elder, whenever he enters a Presbytery or Synod, takes up the key of doctrine; and leaves it wholly behind him, when he removes: He is thus invested with and divested of the pastoral office, by turns,—just as he goes in and out; even as oft as he pleases on the same day: He commences a teaching Elder and ceases to be so, back and fore, as in or out of Court; and though he is not to deal in the lower exercise of the teaching office, he is to deal in the higher exercise of it,—by judicially settling the doctrine to be taught in the Church.

He who can digest such things, may digest any thing. And now, let the Surveyor proceed in his undertaking, his “talk so very easy;” to cajole Elders, at the expence of divine institutions: He must look for success, only among such as are unworthy of that office.

7thly, The way is also prepared, by what has been said,—for making a short work with some questions, by which the Surveyor audaciously catechises the members of Synod. “The questions” (says he, p. 69.) “are material and fair; and I may say, without presumption, they are incapable of a fair answer.”—Well, it is a hard task that may not be tried: And perhaps it can be said, with less presumption,—that answers may soon be made, every bit as fair as the questions.

Question 1. “How then will the Antiburgher-Ministers, and others, answer to God, to the world, or to their own consciences; for obliging people to such obedience to their judicial decisions, as they know the said people cannot perform with judgment and knowledge?”

Answer. This question, like many others, needs a little explication before it can be answered. The Surveyor, indeed, gives a touch of explication, after his manner; in his reason for putting the question.—After charging them with “The denuding all members of a right to vote, who had not been present at the judicial examination of the question;” he adds: “I shall only observe; that if all such were insufficient for giving both a judicious and a judicial vote in the matter, it might reasonably be presumed that private Christians in general were more so.” But it is absolutely false, as hath been evidenced,—that ever they offered to denude any of a right for a judicial vote, upon the ground that he mentions: And they might well enough refuse a judicious vote to any, upon a subject which they had no proper acquaintance with; even so far, that some Elders were complaining,—“that they never so much as saw, or heard read, the decision struck at by the question*.”—Yet these Ministers never had a motion or thought, for “obliging people” to comply with that decision; without first letting them know what it was, and using all proper means for satisfying them concerning it.—

And

*p. 57.
And now let him try how he will “answer to God, to the world, or to” his “own conscience;” for the gross abuse by which only he has given any shadow of a foundation for his questions.

_Quest._ 2. “How can they venture to make _that_ a term of communion to all; which they found even Ministers and ruling Elders, who had not been present at the judicial examination of the question, unqualified on account of their ignorance to vote upon?”

_Answer._ They were making no term of communion, but that of their people holding fast their profession: And as there was then no knowledge to be had of the matter, but by having “been present at the judicial examination of the question;” they never supposed that their people were to pay any regard to the decision made upon it,—till they should, in another manner, be relieved from ignorance of it.

_Quest._ 3. “How could they consistently deny _all_ Elders a right of voting on the question, and yet allow their own ten Elders to protest against voting it?”

_Answ._ They denied no Elders a right of voting; but one who was a party: And there could be nothing more proper or competent,—than for Elders to protest against their being required to give a most _injudicious_ vote, upon what they were not allowed to understand.

_Quest._ 4. “Finally,—How could _Elders_, who both wanted knowledge of the subject, not having been present at any judicial examination of the question, and wanted a right to vote on any matter of truth or error, sin or duty, be sustained judges in the Antiburgher Synod, in Mr Gib’s house, April 10. 1747; while the Acts asserting, and further asserting, the constitution and rights of their Synod, were enacting? Or, were these Acts matter of mere order and Government?”

_Answ._ Yes; in a particular sense, they were _matters of mere order and Government_: While all such matters are also, in a general sense, matters of _truth_ and _duty_; as hath been explained a little ago. And Elders then judged upon nothing, but what they had a sufficient knowledge of; by their own melancholy observation, during the two preceding days.—Finally, sufficient proof has been given already; that what he repeats so often, about their _right_ to vote, is a calumnious falsehood.

VII. Some account is now to be taken of the Surveyor’s invectives, with regard to the Synod’s procedure in the case of the separating Brethren. And,

1. He tries (p. 75, 76, 100.) to make game of their _ACT concerning the ministers and elders presently in a way of separating from the Associate Synod:_ Some account of which has been given in its proper place*.——This act was altogether _declarative_, containing

*p. 78, 79.
containing no exercise of jurisdiction over the persons of these Brethren. It was not, as by the exercise of discipline, a reducing of them into a new situation: But it was only a solemn declaration of what was their present situation, as they were in it already by their own conduct; conduct most notorious and unquestionable,—as having been all transacted, and maintained with the greatest obstinacy, in the open Synod. And so, that Act did properly bear the nature of a Solemn Testimony against the desperate course of these Brethren; such a testimony as is competent, with regard to public evils and the managers thereof,—even where no power of jurisdiction or discipline concerning the same, is either exercised or claimed.

But the Surveyor, taking occasion to play upon the Synod’s use of the word material in another act*,—drolls about all that conduct as a “material crime,” as an “offence but material:” While, though everybody knows the sense of distinguishing the commission of a crime or offence, into material or formal,—the same with saying, that it is indirectly or directly committed; yet an applying of such a distinction to crime or offence, or to the nature of guilt, must be nonsensical and prophane; as much as to call it brown or yellow, round or square.

His invectives against the aforesaid act, as “a material sentence of suspension and deposition,—a material, and consequently an adequate censure” for the “material crime:” against the Synod, in their procedure afterwards on a libel,—as “partial and prejudiced, predetermined and prepossessed;” and against that procedure, as “only a piece of form,”—with no “occasion for any subsequent formal process and censure:” These are points upon which he may be left to the undisturbed enjoyment of his caviling wit. It may be sufficient to observe, that the Synod’s proceeding in a course of discipline, afterwards,—was a special mean of divine institution for getting them reclaimed from a course of most unquestionable scandal: While it was necessary for their conviction and the information of others,—to have the grounds and evidences of the whole, particularly stated and set forth; in the proper forms of a process.—But, according to the Surveyor, such declarations as in [Acts xv. 24. Gal. v. 12.] must have shut the door against any further dealing with the parties.

2. He makes a sort of defence against the several articles of the libel; but with such palpable sophistry and futility, wholly depending on the falsehoods and misrepresentations which have been detected,—as to deserve no further examination. Only, a view may be given of two or three instances; for a sample of the whole stock.

Upon the first article†, he exclaims against the Synod (p. 78.)

as

*p. 74. † p. 83.
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as making it a crime to protest: While it was only such an extraordinary protesting as is there expressed, that they offered to find any fault with.——And he abuses them (p. 79.), for calling the reasons of protest pretended reasons: Dealing in four or five senseless and slanderous guesses, about what they mean by calling them so. Yet the obvious meaning, different from all his guesses, had been explained at the close of the answers to these reasons: “Upon the whole, our Brethren have never, all along, touched upon the proper question in controversy.”

Well might they be called pretended reasons; when, though they bore the name of reasons, they were wholly extraneous to the subject truly in debate,—not one sentence of them so much as seeming to meddle with what they were said to be reasons for*!

And so, he pretends to repel the second article†; by a huddle of loose and extraneous notions, about mutual forbearance (p. 80, 81, 96, 97.): Without ever once touching upon the point in controversy, as to the peculiarity of the forbearance meant; a mutual forbearance to be injoined, about sin, even granting “that there is sufficient objective evidence unto all” of its being sin,—and even when that sinful matter “is made the subject of a solemn oath‡.!”

3. His invective against the Synod’s procedure to the greater excommunication, has its ultimate dependence on this principle; that none but graceless persons can be proper objects of the said censure, or that it imports a determining of them to be in a graceless state ||. He has not the assurance, indeed, to lay down this false and absurd principle in plain terms; but he brings it forth, under covert of an abuse which he commits upon a publication by Mr Gib in the year 1755,—intitled, A Rod of Correction, etc.

He quotes this position from it; “The greater excommunication is justly inflicted, for presumption and obstinacy in any scandal which a Church-judicature may take account of;” As to which he says, “Mr Gib’s opinion may be falsely rejected.”——Now, all the reason he gives for rejecting it, (the same with a rejecting of Matth. xviii. 17.) is taken, not from that position itself; but from the words immediately following, viz.

“But

*p. 42. † p. 84.

‡ He suggests a very ridiculous argument (p. 96.), for a toleration of contradictory oaths in the general matter of religion; by comparing it with the forbearance which Moses exercised toward the Jews [Matth. xix. 8, 9.], about unjustly putting away their wives: And he thus pays a very poor compliment to his party; while, according to that argument,—such a toleration should be exercised toward them, because of the hardness of their hearts.

|| p. 100.—111.
“But are we to reckon that no gracious person is liable to obstinacy, when called to an account for any scandal? Are we to reckon every person graceless, who refuses to hear the Church when under process for scandal? According to this rule of judgment, the small number of gracious persons in the world will be rendered much smaller; or rather, none at all.”——The obvious meaning is, according to the two sides of “this rule of judgment:” That to reckon every obstinate person graceless, would be to render the small number of gracious persons much smaller; and that to reckon no person gracious who is liable to obstinacy, would be to render the small number none at all,—as no person, in this world, is beyond all hazard of falling into such obstinacy about offences. And what reason does he find in this last position, for rejecting the other? Merely the following sense which he puts upon it, with a triple astonishment: “If this position has any meaning, it must imply, that there are very few gracious persons, or rather none at all, who do not deserve to be censured with the greater excommunication!!!” As if he had said,—a possibility of ever deserving, must imply a present actual deserving.—He must have been sore pinched for argument, when he could substitute a construction so idiotical into the place of it. But such is his way of reasoning; such the “virgin voice” of his “common sense,” his honesty and candour.

Section V. Of the Surveyor’s false Doctrine, about the Religious Clause of some Burgess-oaths.

After the defence which has been made, it is time to deal with the Surveyor in his own quarters; chiefly by examining a set of false and corrupt doctrines which he has broached, in behalf of the Burgess-oaths: Beginning with his false doctrine about the terms of that oath; as it is a present swearing of its religious clause, among Seceders,—which is always to be understood here, when a general mention is made of the Burgess-oath. And,

I. He says, on the first page of his preface,—“I cannot condemn the Burgess-oath, upon the grounds the Antiбурgher-Synod have done:” Which bears an insinuation, that he can condemn it on some other grounds. And indeed he can do so: For as hath been explained in an Appendix to the former Volume, and will further appear in the course of this Examination,—his principles strike against all religious oaths or covenants, all public standards or tests of orthodoxy in the Christian Church; and so the Burgess-oath, in particular, will be dismissed among good company.
But he stands out in a most strenuous defence of that oath, against all the condemnation made of it by the Synod; and all the grounds upon which they have proceeded in this matter,—Yet his party have no reason to reckon themselves obliged to him, for such a defence; while he gives it out, as “the opinion of the Burghers stated and vindicated.” For, so far as hath yet appeared, the opinion which he means has never been generally adopted,—by the ministers or people of that denomination.

No more than seven ministers and four elders, first and last,—ever took up a defence of the Burgess-oath against the Synod’s decision concerning it, as protesters against that decision. One of these ministers soon retracted*; and he made a profession of sorrow before his congregation, for having engaged in that defence. Only other two of them are now alive, with two at most of these four elders; and the Surveyor now makes a fifth defender of that oath among Seceders. But it is more than can be presently recollected,—if a sixth person of this character, in any formal appearance of it, can just now be found on the face of the earth. The Surveyor therefore used a deal of freedom with his party, in palming such a character upon them all.

It is true, that some general terms were got slipped in to some of their acts,—which materially import a sisting of themselves under the banner of the Burgess-oath. But it is as true, concerning both the Ministers and people called Burghers, (excepting those old protesters and this new Surveyor); that it was not properly the Synod’s decision about the Burgess-oath, but the dismal absurdity about Term of Communion,—upon which they stumbled and fell. Accordingly, while his Synod pretends to be the true original Associate Synod; they have the said decision (so far as the world knows) still continued among them, as a standing deed of that Synod, to this very day†.

And the Surveyor is greatly mistaken, when he flatters himself with this notion (p. 81.); that “the lawfulness of the Burgess-oath is generally agreeable to the apprehensions of the Christian people in Scotland; except to the Antiburghers themselves.” For, whatever apprehensions they have about the lawfulness of it, among the members of the established Church: It is one of the most notorious things of the present time,—that these Antiburghers are generally looked upon by people of all denominations, except the Burghers themselves; as the only Seceders who have acted honestly, or consistently with the Secession-cause,—in the controversy about Burgess-oaths, and the breach which followed.

II. It is proper that the Reader should have under his eye, in this place, the religious clause now spoken of, viz. “Here I

* p. 48, 90.  † p. 352.
“protest, before God and your Lordships, that I profess, and allow with my heart, the true Religion presently professed within this realm, and authorised by the laws thereof: I shall abide thereat, and defend the same, to my life’s end; renouncing the Roman religion called Papistry.”

The Surveyor found it for his purpose, to begin (p. 2, 3.) with a most false account of the controversy about that clause; as follows: viz.

“The disputants all agree,—That this profession and settlement of religion, refer to the public profession and legal settlement of religion in Scotland, at and since the glorious Revolution, anno 1690.—But the contending parties are by no means agreed about the meaning of the true religion which is said, in these oaths, to be professed and authorised.”——It is fact, that these on the side of the oath did endeavour to turn the whole attention upon the words true Religion; as if there had been nothing ado, but to settle the meaning of this expression. But these on the other side would never admit, for one moment, that this was any proper hinge of the controversy; they never maintained any debate about these words by themselves, or otherways than as standing in relation to the words presently professed and authorised: So that the controversy, as managed by them,—did turn upon the present profession and settlement of religion, as homologated by that oath. And so the matter was set forth in the first question ever stated on the subject, comprehending both sides of the debate*.

III. The Surveyor seems to be plain enough, in telling what he understands by the true religion in that oath.—He gives this account of the matter, (p. 3.); “The Burghers insist, that the system of the true religion is the thing professed and allowed with his heart, by the swearer: And this system, they affirm, is fully contained in the word of God; and the main heads of it compendiously exemplified in the Westminster Confession of Faith.” And he further says (p. 34.), “The true religion professed in the Church of Scotland is exemplified in her standards; these declare what she pretends to maintain in regard to doctrine, worship, discipline and government.” By which he seems to take in also the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Directory for the public worship of God, the Form of Presbyterian Church government, and the Directory for family worship.—And so he appears to understand, that the words true religion, in the oath,—do immediately mean the matter or system of doctrines set forth, from the word of God, in these Reformation-standards: As to all which, there will be no controversy with him; in any abstract considering of the words true religion, or in taking them separately from the words presently professed and authorised. But it will appear afterwards, that he has a deceitful reserve against

taking

*p. 30.
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taking the oath as a swearing to these standards: And this reserve he has, (p. 2. 13.); in telling, that the swearer does not engage to “any thing more than the system of true Scripture-religion,—the true scriptural system of pure and undefiled religion.”

“But” (says he, p. 3.) “the Antiburghers strenuously maintain, that when a burgess swears,—he engages by oath to approve with his heart whatever is presently called true religion in the established Church of Scotland; and is publicly professed and legally settled under that notion, or in any connection with it, in that realm:—This is a general, and, I imagine, not an over-charged representation of their gloss upon the oaths in question.” Yet what he thus imagines, is a most false and injurious misrepresentation.—They never offered to put such a gloss upon these oaths: They never set forth the matters of their quarrel with a present swearing of the religious clause, as matters comprehended in any meaning which they supposed to be now put upon the words true religion; thus making the controversy to turn upon these words. And so, all his hotch-potch haranguing against them about true religion; as if his main business, in the debate with them, were just to settle and vindicate what is or ought to be the present meaning of true religion,—keeping good things in, and ill things out of that meaning: All this is but a deceitful method which he uses, for concealing and burying the truth; for confounding and bewildering the friends of it; for amusing and hardening his own party; for imposing on the world; and for blackening the Associate Synod.

Let him put as good a sense as he pleases, upon the words true religion; let him take in all our Reformation standards, and all the Bible, into even the present meaning of these words,—and nothing else, nothing worse: This is all a matter to them in the present controversy; they will trouble him with no contradiction upon that point, in any separate view of these good words! What they stand upon is this; that the true religion, take it in the best sense he can, has not such a state and bearing in the present national profession and settlement thereof,—as may be falsely acquiesced in, even by a solemn oath: or, that our Reformation-standards are not so exhibited and maintained in this profession and settlement, that a person may safely swear his being satisfied herewith,—so far as to see no necessity of a public testimony against any defections and corruptions of the said profession and settlement, in a separate communion from that of the Established Church,—but engages to abide therein; which they take to be the meaning of the burgess-oath. Such is the view which they proceed upon, as hath been explained in another place*.

And the Surveyor, inconsistent with himself as with the truth, finds himself obliged to own,—that such indeed is their way of stating the case. “It is their avowed opinion” (says he, p. 4.)

“—on

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*p. 24,—28.
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“—on the sense and meaning of the clause in dispute,—that the propriety or sin of swearing it at any given time, must be determined by the condition of the national church.” And though he represents this as a ridiculous opinion, he needs not think to get them laughed out of it,—that the propriety or sin of an oath of communion with the national church, must be determined by the condition of the national church; for how else can it be determined!

IV. Though he owns, as hath been observed,—that the oath refers “to the public profession and legal settlement of religion in Scotland, at and since the glorious Revolution:” Yet he tells this wonderful story concerning it (p. 105.); that “The present national profession and settlement of religion,—is no part of the matter of the Burgess-oath.” He says accordingly (p. 11, 12. 24.), that “the swearer only engages to approve and abide by the true religion itself;”—not “the mode of professing it:——The oath implies ONLY a cordial approbation of the true religion itself, which is presently professed; and an engagement to adhere, with a never ceasing a never changing attachment, to that divine system!”

This account had been given of the case, (in Remarks upon an Act for a Fast), viz. “The Synod conceives that there are two things in general held forth by these words, true religion presently professed and authorised, viz. the true religion materially considered, as one thing,—and the present professing and authorising thereof in this realm, and another thing: And it is this other thing, viz. the present professing and authorising of the said religion in this realm, (which they conceive is in sundry instances injurious unto, and comprehends things inconsistent with the said true religion),—it is this which the Synod all along means by the present national profession and settlement of religion: So that their quarrel about the Burgess-oath is not a quarrel with swearing to the true religion distinctly considered; but a quarrel with swearing to it complexly, considered under the form of the said present national profession and settlement, according to the above meaning of these words.”——Now, with regard to the above passage, the Surveyor some-how got the confidence to say (p. 104, 105.): “It is very remarkable, that Mr Gib has fully acquitted the Burghers; and materially, nay formally approved their plea; in his Remarks on the Burgher-Synod’s Act for a Fast, p. 14, 15.—He says, the Synod he is connected with meant all along to condemn or quarrel about another thing, viz. The present national profession and settlement of religion, which is no part of the matter of the Burgess-oath. It seems then, that the Burghers never meant to approve, what the Antiburghers all along meant to condemn. Pray then tell us, what was the error of the Burghers? Was it this, that they would not substitute
“substitute the Antiburghers other thing, in the room of the one thing expressed in the Burgess-oath?”

So then, according to him,—the one thing, the only thing expressed in the Burgess-oath; the one, the only thing approved of by this oath; is just that divine system, the true religion itself—abstracting from the mode of professing it.—The sum of the whole is, that the Burgess-oath just means a swearing to the contents of some books; first the Bible, and then what of its doctrines are to be found in our Subordinate Standards!

V. He basely reproaches the Synod (p. 12.),—as men who “strain every nerve, to involve” the said oath “in obscurity and embarrassment; by attaching ideas to it that have no connection with it, except in a riotous imagination!”—Yet all the straining of their nerves, in this matter, has been by way of vindicating the native and obvious meaning of that oath; against very strange obscurity and embarrassment, in which some on the other side have attempted to involve it. They plead for no other sense of the oath, but that which will occur to every unprejudiced person at the first reading of it,—as the only sense which it can properly bear; no other than what must have occurred as such, to every Burgess who ever swore it,—so as he could not mistake the matter, but by shutting his eyes. And let a person wander through the whole labyrinth of the Surveyor’s reasonings on the other side,—yet the whole must evanish from before his eyes, like the breaking of an enchantment; whenever he returns to the exercise of sober sense, in considering the terms of that oath,—according to the time and circumstances of its administration.

That straining of nerves which he reproaches, has only been in behalf of the following very plain things; against the strainings of a very absurd contradiction to them:—That the present professing and authorising of the true religion in this realm, or the present national profession and settlement of religion in Scotland,—just means the public state of religion at present, in this Church and land; or what appearances for and maintenance of the true religion, laid down from the word of God in our Reformation-standards,—are presently made by Church and State, in their respective capacities: That the manifold defections and corruptions, which are witnessed against in the present Testimony among Seceders,—do lie in or cleave unto the said public state of religion, or the national profession and settlement of religion at this day: That the professing which a Burgess swears, cannot be a profession of diversity from and opposition to,—but must be a profession of unity and communion with the national profession referred to by his oath, as existing only in the Established Church: That the swearer does thus acknowledge, approve of and acquiesce in the present national profession and settlement of reli-
An Examination of a late Survey.

Appendix III.

region; so far as to acknowledge communion, and engage to communion therein with the Established Church,—without managing any public testimony against the said defections and corruptions, in a separate communion: And that, therefore, a present swearing of this oath is utterly inconsistent with the character of Seceders,—or must, in the nature of the thing, import a giving up with that character.

Such is their sense of the oath: Quite conformable to all apprehensions which are known to be entertained of it by any, except the Surveyor and some few of his party; while it is also conformable to the declared sentiments of all our Reformers in the last century, about the proper meaning of the controverted terms,—as hath been formerly explained*.

With regard to the Surveyor’s sense of it, he tells (p. 3.),—that both sides “have the same ideas of the profession and settlement of religion referred to in these oaths;” so that the controversy, between them, must turn upon the import of the reference thus made: And, according to him, it imports no approbation of the profession and settlement referred to; while ONLY the system of the true religion itself, as lying in some books, is approved of and sworn to by the Burgess-oath.—But this way of explaining the oath, is a gross contradiction to the terms of it; a subverting of its whole positive design,—and a perverting of it into a piece of solemn deceit.

1st, His way of explaining the Burgess-oath, is a gross contradiction to the terms of it.—If what is meant and referred to by the words true religion, be a part of the matter of the oath; what is meant and referred to by the words presently professed and authorised in this realm, must as well be so: Because all these words do equally belong to that oath. Yea, these last words are perfectly essential to it: For though it bear otherwise, that Papistry is not the religion meant in the phrase true religion; yet by these words only it excludes several other religions from being meant,—even Jewish or Mahometan or Pagan,—while each of these is by many reckoned the true religion. And when the swearer uses these words, for the essential purpose of defining what he means by the phrase true religion; it must be shamefully absurd and disingenuous to pretend, that he is not using these words with any approbation of what they mean and refer to: Or that he does not thereby (in the sense and to the effect before expressed) acknowledge, approve of and acquiesce in the present national profession and settlement of religion; while he refers thereto, without any exception, as the general test and measure of what he particularly means by the true religion.

The Surveyor is at pains to throw dust into the eyes of his reader, upon this point; by telling some stories which are no-
way to the purpose.—“If the Acts of Parliament referred to” (says he p. 17.) “ratified any thing else than the true religion, it is absurd to suppose that the Burgess-oath, which approves and adopts the true religion presently authorised in Scotland, has any business with them; it would affront common sense, to attempt a proof of this.” But it would be every bit as bad usage of common sense, to attempt a proof of the oath having some business with the present authorising; by way of approving and adopting the same,—just as presently existing, in a state of various defections and corruptions.

“The true religion” (adds he, p. 11, 33.) “sworn to in the last century is professed, though not by oath, in this century; the substance is the same in both;—the Established Church of Scotland has never cancelled one article of the system she adopted in her better times.” All which just means, according to his sense of professing the system mentioned; that as good editions as formerly of the Bible, Confession, Catechisms, Directories, and Form of Church-Government,—are still made use of in the Established Church; without an Index expurgatorius for canceling, or obliging Printers to leave out any passages of these books. But as to the national profession and settlement of religion, (that is, the public state of religion in this Church and land, or the appearances for and maintenance of our Reformation-Standards by Church and State),,—which is approved and adopted by the Burgess-oath; is all this the same as in her better times, with the mere exception of Covenanting!

He further says (p. 33, 34.),—“There is indeed a contradiction between the true religion contained in the word of God, and exemplified in her standards, which the established Church presently professes; and the corrupt works and management, whereby she practically denies it:—But even these crimes are so contrary to the true religion professed and authorised in her, that she is condemned on these heads of her own self; and the appeal may be made from her wrong practices, to her sound principles:—Though she has made many grievous laws, and done many wrong things, on the head of religion; she has never required an explicit approbation of them from her members:—What should hinder a man from approving the true religion, if called to do so; and yet disapproving these opinions and management which are inconsistent with it, when he has an opportunity and a call to do so?”—And here indeed he gives a pretty ample testimonial for the established Church of Scotland, in her present state; that the principles contained in the word of God, and exemplified in our Reformation-standards, are still her sound principles,—which would make her to be still the pillar and ground of the truth: And to make this consist with what he finds himself obliged to own (p. 33.),—“that the es-

“tablished
“Established Church of Scotland has, of late years, made many bold attempts to corrupt the system of her principles, respecting doctrine, worship, discipline and government;” we must suppose, it seems, that all these bold attempts have proved unsuccessful! He also testifies, upon the matter,—that she has no explicit terms of communion which are sinful; (though what was required of the four Brethren in 1733, as also of Mr Gillespie and some others in 1752,—was thought to testify the contrary:) And if she has any implicit terms of that sort, this was below his notice.—Yet all these crimes, wrong things, wrong practices, grievous laws, corrupt-works, opinions and managements inconsistent with the true religion,—whereby she practically denies it: All these things are most plainly matters of defection and corruption in the profession she is making, which profession the Burgess-oath most plainly approves and adopts; so far as to leave no room for disapproving these things,—at least unto any public testifying against them, in a separate communion from her.

His finishing defence on this point, is of a very curious nature; while all the strength of it lies in the solemnity of it,—being a notification which he makes (p. 35.) as by tuck of drum, or with a Herald’s coat on his back: “In case any body shall still continue to think, that the defections of the established Church make a part of her religious profession; be it known to all men, that the Burghers think otherwise.” But he might have spared himself the trouble of making this proclamation: As it is not a supposable case that any body ever thought, what he here supposes they “shall still continue to think.”—For, taking her religious profession in his favourite sense, for the true religion which she professes; no body ever thought these defections a part of that. And taking it in the Burgess-oath sense, for her professing of the true religion; no body ever thought these defections a part of this either, but only a depravity thereof: And it may be supposed, that even very few Burghers have got their brains turned to a thinking otherways.

2dly, His way of explaining the Burgess-oath, is a subverting of its whole positive design.—He says (p. 27.), “The original design of that clause is manifest from the tenor of the clause itself, viz. to exclude Papists from becoming Burgesses;” And here is a very good negative secured, as to what the Burgess-religion is not. But (says he, p. 28.) “The oath is adapted to serve another purpose too; and that is, to satisfy the imposer what the religious sentiments of the.swearer really are:” And no doubt this other purpose, this positive design, is very material; even so much that, without it, all must go for nothing.

But the Imposer can have no business with the swearers religious sentiments, otherways than as these are brought forth in his religious profession. The Burgess swears his professing of the true religion:
religion: And no rational satisfaction can be given to the Imposer by this, nothing conformable to the plain and particular honesty which belongs to the nature of an oath; if he is not to take the swearers professing as coincident with his own professing,—that professing in communion with the established Church, which the oath directly refers to. It can be nothing better than a bite put upon the Imposer, for the swearer to mean, (without one word in his oath signifying so much, but all the contrary,)—that his professing is in a separate communion; a professing in a stated opposition to what the Imposer, by his own profession, maintains to be the right way of professing the true religion.—Besides, according to the Surveyor’s sense of that true religion, (as may be further explained afterwards,)—the swearer is only to be looked upon as swearing to the Bible; with a regard to subordinate standards, only so far as he silently thinks them agreeable to his Bible. And thus the oath can serve no purpose at all, as to any positive design of it: While the Imposer is still left utterly at a loss with the swearer, about both his religious profession and religious sentiments; as to whether he may not, after all, belong to any class of heretics among nominal Protestants,—who agree in owning the Bible. 

Such is the Surveyor’s abominable way of explaining the Burgess oath; in regard to its positive design. And yet he brazens it out with a most singular degree of impudence (p. 28, 29.)—the swearer is only to be looked upon as swearing to the Bible; with a regard to subordinate standards, only so far as he silently thinks them agreeable to his Bible. And thus the oath can serve no purpose at all, as to any positive design of it: While the Imposer is still left utterly at a loss with the swearer, about both his religious profession and religious sentiments; as to whether he may not, after all, belong to any class of heretics among nominal Protestants,—who agree in owning the Bible.

For supporting such an arrogant pretence, he forges a dialogue betwixt an Imposer and a Swearer of the oath; such a dialogue as indeed could never take place,—but upon the Imposer being a fool, and the seceding Swearer a knave. The issue of it accordingly is, as he represents in capitals; that the Imposer’s quarrelling his sense of the oath would insinuate, concerning “these famous burghs” where it is used,—“that they INTRUST THEIR AFFAIRS IN THE HANDS OF FOOLS.” And no doubt the Imposer would be a very great fool, were he to state the case as the Surveyor would have him; making the oath to mean,—that the Swearer has “carefully examined all the complex circumstances of the profession and settlement of religion, and particularly the Acts of Parliament at and since the Revolution authorising religion, and upon a perusal of them he approves the whole;” Thus requiring the Swearer to be thoroughly versed in all the history of Church and State-managements about religion, at least for above eighty years backward; and absolutely pleased with every act and circumstance thereof, that he has met with in this careful examination. Well, according to the Surveyor,—the Swearer has no more ado, but to repel the Im-
poser’s foolery “by this short reply; Sir, I only profess and allow with my heart the true religion presently professed in this realm, and authorised by the laws thereof,” having no business with the complex circumstances of that professing and authorising: And this he blasphemously compares with the short and sufficient reply that our Lord made to Peter, John xxi. 21, 22, 23.

But the Surveyor most foolishly imagines the above foolish sense, to be that which the Synod opposes to his sense of the Burgess-oath. For, as may be further evidenced afterwards,—they never took it to mean any acquaintance with and approbation of particular acts and circumstances, about the profession and settlement of religion; other than what belongs to an acquiescing in communion with the Established Church,—according to what is commonly known to be the general state of the profession and settlement of religion, among her hands.

3dly, His way of explaining the Burgess-oath, is a perverting of it into a piece of solemn deceit; with regard to the use of these words,—“I profess, and allow with my heart, the true religion presently professed within this realm, and authorised by the laws thereof.” For,

1. It is quite unquestionable, that the oath means a summary and total account of the swearer’s religious character; so as to admit of nothing for being ascribed to him in this character, beyond what is briefly comprehended in the said oath. But, according to the Surveyor’s sense of it, the seceding Swearer must deceitfully mean,—that he is then giving only a partial account of his religious character, in what is common to Seceders and Kirk-folk; equivocating, with a mental reservation of what is peculiar to Seceders.

2. A Christian profession must always imply Church-communion; because the professors are always to be considered as Church-members: As engaged, not in a single, but in a joint profession; not merely as separate individuals professing,—but as members of Christ’s visible body, making their profession in some particular Church-communion. This is essential to the profession of Christianity: And therefore it must be a matter of downright absurdity and deceit,—to swear a professing of the true religion, without meaning a profession thereof in some particular Church-communion. But such is the swearing in the Burgess-oath, according to the Surveyor’s sense of it: The seceding Swearer is not to be understood, as swearing in immediate communion with the established Church; and the oath cannot admit of considering him, as swearing in such communion with any other sort of professors under heaven.

3. There is a very shocking deceit, in his way of dealing with these words,—presently professed and authorised in this realm. Though these words are as essential to the oath, and have as per-

manent
manent a state in it, as any others which belong to it; yet he only takes a transient hint from them,—as pointing out, that the true religion means the system contained in the Bible and other books afore-mentioned: Immediately after which he sets them a-packing, as if the.swearer’s conscience had no more business with them,—no business with the state of that professing and authorising, which they refer to; no business but with the true religion!—He thus teaches the swearer (after taking the above hint from them, like a gentleman using a cadie for shewing him a house) to make an elopement, by a sort of legerdemain, from all the particular grip that these words are ready to take of an honest man.

4. There is likewise a very shocking deceit, in his manifold ranting upon this good phrase the true religion.—He all along considers it abstractly, as just meaning a system of truths contained in books; “The true scriptural system of pure and undefiled religion,—fully contained in the word of God, and the main heads of it compendiously exemplified in the Westminster Confession of Faith,” (p. 2, 3.): And he is for a Seceder to make no bones of swearing to that system as a sort of commonty, in conjunction with all other Burgesses,—Kirk-presbyterians, Relief-folk, Episcopal and Independants; thus deceitfully uniting with persons of different and opposite religious denominations, in the same oath of engagement to the true religion,—as if there were no religious difference among them.

But this is not all. For as he teaches, (p. 12, 13. 24. 105.),—“That the oath implies ONLY a cordial approbation of the TRUE RELIGION ITSELF,” not “any thing more than the system of true Scripture-religion;” without any approbation of the manner in which it is professed and authorised, or any acknowledgment of communion with the national church in this matter: Such a vague way of swearing to the true religion, would equally serve the purpose in all Burghs of any Protestant countries; Presbyterian or Episcopal, Calvinist or Lutheran. Yea (abstract from the additional swearing against Papistry), it would serve the purpose in Paris, Madrid and Rome; just as well as in Edinburgh, Perth and Glasgow.—For the Bible is still some-way publicly owned in all these places, as the original system of the true religion. And the swearer might still bring himself off by telling, as the Surveyor teaches him,—that he is only swearing to the true religion itself, not to any thing more than the system of true scripture-religion; that it is not “agreeable to truth to say, that the true religion professed and authorised either advances or declines,—true religion is the truth of God, and therefore it must be eternal and unchangeable, like the God of truth himself,” (p. 8. 11.): And that “the present national profession and settlement of religion” (in any of these places), is no part of the matter of the Burgess-oath,” p. 105.

Such
Such is the base deceit of the Surveyor’s scheme about that oath, utterly inconsistent with all righteous use and end of any oath: While it is made like a shoe, so wide and supple as to serve any foot; even turned into a solemn juggling with God and man, upon a matter of the last importance*.

5. He uses a very singular defence for all this deceit, with a deal of nauseous repetitions and amplifications; retreating to it in every pinch, as to an impregnable fortress.—It first turns upon this general principle, (p. 12.): “Provided a cordial approbation of, and a never-ceasing never-changing attachment to the mode and circumstances of professing the true religion, at any given period, be included in the matter of that oath; upon this supposition, the oath must ALWAYS have been frivolous, ensnaring, and undoubtedly sinful.” It next turns upon a twitting of the Synod over and over, by an argumentum ad hominem,—as if he had them just among his feet; for their allowing that the said oath might be safely sworn in the Reformation-period, and yet refusing that it can be so in this period: Seeing (p. 8, 9.) “the system of true religion professed in both, was but imperfectly understood and imperfectly stated in both; and it cannot be pretended that there is a difference in the kind, but only in the degrees of that imperfection which is common to both periods;—and if such imperfection renders it unsafe to allow with the heart the true religion PRESENTLY professed, the same kind of imperfection must have rendered it unsafe to have allowed with the heart the true religion THEN professed.” And the whole amounts to this; that by excluding the foresaid approbation and attachment from the matter of the oath, as necessary for making it safe THEN,—“it may be safely sworn NOW.”

The import and effect of such reasoning, will come to be particularly considered in another section.—But it may be observed here,

*The method of juggling that he teaches is oddly varied, on p. 8.—There he lays it down as his principle, (with an awkward and vain pretence of favour to it from the Synod’s doctrine); “That Christians may allow with their heart a system of true religion, which does not comprehend ALL THE ARTICLES OF TRUE RELIGION.” And so they may safely swear a general oath about the true religion; such as, in the nature of the thing, professes a comprehending (however summarily) all the articles of it;—while, consistently with this, only some articles of it may be comprehended in their oath: For only some articles of it may be comprehended in the system of true scripture-religion, of the true Bible-religion (p. 5. 13.), which they adopt by that oath; though this divine system must necessarily comprehend all the articles of it!—It is hard to deal with deceit, when sheltered by impenetrable nonsense.
here, in the first place; that two blacks cannot make a white: Or the Synod’s pretended wrong, of allowing that it might be safely sworn in the former period; this can be no excuse for his real wrong, of arguing that it may be safely sworn in the present period. And, in the next place; had he acted honestly upon the above general principle, he would have found no fault with the Synod for reckoning it sinful now,—but only for not reckoning it so always: While he falsely reckons, as to the including a general approbation of the national profession and settlement of religion in the matter of the oath, (which indeed can never be got out of it); that this will make it sinful “at any given period.”——It is in vain that he seeks any refuge, in the vague and ambiguous terms of mode and circumstances of professing; as may be discovered afterwards.

Section VI. Of the Surveyor’s false Doctrine, about Religious swearing under the Old Testament.

Religious swearing, under the Old Testament, was generally twofold; right and wrong. As to the right way of it, in Solemn Covenanting; the Surveyor has made sad work of that, by his preface: As hath been explained in an Appendix to the preceding volume.——And as to the wrong way of it, he makes sad work of this also, (p. 36, 37, 38, 39.): While he makes it so far wrong, (for the sake of destroying any parallel betwixt it and the Burgess-oath),—as directly to cast the ten Tribes, and indirectly the other two, quite out of the visible Church; leaving no such Church of God in the world: For the effectuating of which dreadful purpose, he commits a piece of the grossest violence upon his Bible. And,

I. He takes occasion for all this, from what a member of the Synod had written upon a particular text (Hos. iv. 15.); and which he disingenuously deals with, as if it had been a commentary made by the Synod. The view he gives of it is as follows,

‘Their way of reasoning from this text is so singular, that I must certainly incur a violent suspicion of misrepresenting it, if any other words be used besides their own. You will find this great curiosity in the Appendix to their Acts and proceedings, pages 152, 153, 154. The sum of their comment is founded upon the following facts.’ [N.B. He brings in what follows by full marks of quotation, as exactly transcribed from the said Appendix, without using any other words besides their own]:—“That the ten Tribes were the established Church of the people of God;—that the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were in a religious secession from them;—that the same true religion was materially professed in both the Established Church and Secession;—that there was but one national Church at that time in Palestine;—that the ten Tribes, who were this nati-

“onal
“ona! Church, could not swear THE LORD LIVETH, because there
would have been A FALSENESS IN THE VERY OATH:—that the
only objections to Judah swearing this oath at Gilgal and Beth-aven,
were the circumstances of their swearing it in conjunction with the
corrupt national Church of Israel, that is, the ten Tribes; and, finally,—
that the prohibition, come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Beth-
aven, nor swear THE LORD LIVETH, is addressed to Judah
immediately.”

This is all the quotation which he pretends to make, from the
pages referred to: And which is, indeed, a “great curiosity;” as it must
be a rare thing, to find any writer sufficiently hardened for committing
such an imposition upon his Reader. Though the above state is given
out as a mere transcript from these pages, without using “any other
words besides their own,”—and even with a scurrilous reason, why he
could not venture to use any other; yet not one clause thereof, as laid, is
to be found in the whole Appendix: All is so much an abusive
manufacture of his own,—that the passage from which he pretends to
quote, precisely in “their own words,” is thereby most injuriously
falsified. It is really hard to believe, that any man would be capable of
acting so base a part; after such an introduction as he uses: But the
reader may judge for himself, upon considering the passage referred to;
which is now to be exhibited.

II. That whole passage, in the aforesaid Appendix, is exactly as
follows:

“Though the precise subject of the Synod’s sentence, concerning
the religions clause of some Burgess-oaths, [viz. a present swearing
thereof by Seceders, as the said clause comes necessarily in this period
to be used and applied,] is a thing which had not properly a parallel in
any former periods: Yet, by all parity of reason, the Synod’s conduct
about that matter is in the old paths, where is the good way; so that they
have walked in a way cast up, and gone forth by the footsteps of the
flock.”

“That this eminently holds, with respect to the example of the
Church of Scotland in her last reforming period, hath been discovered
already*. And it as eminently holds, with respect to scripture-example
and rule; in Hos. iv. 15. Though thou Israel play the Harlot, yet let not
Judah offend; and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Beth-
aven; NOR SWEAR, THE LORD LIVETH.”

“As to Israel and Judah, they were of distinct ecclesiastical
capacities; or two churches, in respect of public formal communion:
And as that of Israel was the church of the majority, in the kingdom of
the ten Tribes; so that of Judah was the church of the minority, in the
kingdom of the other two

“Tribes

*p. 27, 28.
“Tribes. Again, these two churches were generally of one religion; in as much as it was materially the true religion which took place in both. Further, the church of the majority in Israel was exceeding corrupt; as indeed the root of their public corruption did lie—in their being of any distinct church-state from Judah, considering the peculiar situation of the visible church under the Mosaic economy: So that their national profession and establishment of religion were exceedingly corrupt; in a way of apostasy from and opposition unto the just order, purity and maintenance of divine worship and institutions, which had been once attained to and avouched: And thus the true religion did suffer very awful injury, under their national profession and establishment thereof. But the church of the minority in Judah were in a state of religious secession from them; in as much as they were still adhering to the temple at Jerusalem, according to the just order and purity of divine worship and institutions there. And these things are so plain, from the current of scripture, that they need not here be further insisted upon.”

“Now, in the foregoing text, Judah is called to stand fast in that state of religious Secession; so as not to symbolize with them, in their corrupt case and course. Particularly the call is, not to symbolize with them in religious swearing,—nor swear, the Lord liveth. This oath, The Lord liveth, was, in other circumstances, commanded; as in Jer. iv. 2. And as that oath was of a general nature, it behoved, in due circumstances, to be a general avouchment of the living God; comprehending an avouchment of and engagement unto all that worship and these institutions by which he was manifested, and in the observance whereof he was to be acknowledged, as the living God; in opposition to the dead idols of the nations: And so, it behoved to be an oath homologating the public profession and establishment of the religion of the living God.”

“But this oath is here forbidden, in conjunction with those of the corrupt church of Israel at Gilgal and Beth-aven. And it is forbidden, as an oath which behoved, in these circumstances, to have a falseness in it; according to Jer. v. 2. Though they say the Lord liveth, surely they swear falsely. Even the very oath would have a falseness in it, as the text expressly denotes. And it is impossible to conceive how the oath itself could, in these circumstances, have a falseness in it; any other way than as, in these circumstances, it was an oath generally homologating the corrupt profession and establishment of religion in Israel: Particularly with respect to the service which was offered him at Beth-aven and Dan, and the manner of his worship at Gilgal and Beersheba. And that this was really the case, appears from the paraphrase given to the oath in the foresaid circumstances,
“circumstances, *Amos* viii. 14. *They—swear by the sin of Samaria; and say, thy God, O Dan, liveth; and the manner of Beersheba liveth.*

“Now, if the said general oath about religion was thus *constructed of and forbidden*, merely from the circumstances of swearing it in the foresaid *conjunction* with those of the corrupt church of *Israel*; it is still more evident, that the general oath about religion, in the *religious clause* of some Burgess-oaths, ought in like manner to be constructed of and forbidden as the Synod have done: Because, over and above the present *similar* circumstances of swearing it; it *expressly* takes up the *national profession and establishment* of religion, in their present complex state.”

III. The Reader may now compare the Surveyor’s extract with this *original*; for a specimen of his modesty, faithfulness and candour!—Beside the other injurious use which he there makes of *his own words*, (even under a solemn denial of his using them at all!); the said extract contains three palpable lies made upon the Appendix which it refers to: That this Appendix represents the ten Tribes as the *established Church of the people of God*, as the one only *national Church then in Palestine*; that it meddles with the swearing of the oath by the ten Tribes, (which it does not, more than the Synod’s sentence meddles with the swearing of the Burgess-oath by members of the present established Church;) and that it does not include the circumstance of swearing the oath *at Gilgal and Beth-aven*, among the *sinful* circumstances of Judah’s swearing it in conjunction with *Israel*. There is even no shadow of such things in that Appendix.

As to the shameful attacks which he makes upon the “way of reasoning” there used, they may be sufficiently repelled in the following particulars.

1. By the Appendix, *Judah* is represented as “in a state of religious *Secession*” from Israel; upon which the Surveyor tries a turn of his favourite mockery. Yet this he could not here find an occasion for, but by means of a foul trick; in taking *Seceders* to be used as a character of guilt and infamy, the same with *separatists*: And as to “this vulgar way of judging” (with which he sneers a purpose to content himself,) “that the ten Tribes were the separatists,”—there will never be any occasion for “very extraordinary abilities to disprove” it, or “very great credulity” for believing “it to be erroneous upon the Synod’s authority;” as neither their authority, nor the opinion of any belonging to them, had ever any turn against that “vulgar way of judging.”

But the writer of the Appendix thought there was no harm, in complying with the vulgar way of speaking; which always, in the case of a rupture, ascribes *Secession* (not to the majority, but)
to the minority. And the Surveyor may try his hand, if he can get the course of language so far turned,—as to make the present established Church pass for the Seceders: Because they, and not these vulgarly so called, have separated from the Reformation-state and Testimony of the national Church of Scotland.

2. He grossly misrepresents the way of reasoning, in the above passage of the Appendix; as if it proceeded upon the running of a parallel betwixt the swearing forbidden in the text, and a present swearing of the Burgess-oath: Whereas it contains an express refusal of pretending a proper parallel, and only proceeds upon a parity of reason.

There is no such thing in the said passage, as a distinguishing Judah by the name of the Secession,—and Israel, by the name of the only national established Church; thus to make “the established Church of Scotland like the ten Tribes,” and “the Seceders like Judah.” All this is a barefaced forgery committed upon that passage; which contains not one word contradictory to the truth, of Judah being then the only national Church of a right establishment,—though the other had a sort of national establishment also.

And it was very idle to tell, that the swearing forbidden in the text “cannot be a parallel case to the Burgess-oath;” because the said swearing “must have been at all times and in all cases highly criminal,”—which the Burgess-oath is not pretended to have been. For it had not been always criminal to perform the most solemn religious worship at Gilgal,—and at Beth-aven, formerly called Beth-el; as appears from how Jacob with his household had been employed in the one place, and Joshua with the children of Israel in the other, Gen. xxxv. 3, 14, 15. Josh. v. 10, 15.—And such a manner of swearing the Burgess-oath as the Synod have condemned, must have been at all times and in all cases sinful; as well as the manner of swearing forbidden in the text,—with regard to an oath at least as lawful, in other circumstances, as ever the Burgess-oath could be.

3. He makes a home stroke at the way of reasoning from the aforesaid text, by manfully striking a blow at the text itself,—“What if that whole verse” (says he) “be addressed to Israel, or at least all the last part of it? I am clear that it does refer to them, and to them only it is primarily directed. If this be the case, the argument is quite spoiled, so far as it refers to Seceders.”

Such is the very new question he proposes; and such the answer he immediately gives to it, for his own part: Yet, though the answer were good, he is quite mistaken,—in supposing that “the argument is” thereby “quite spoiled, so far as it refers to Seceders;” as will be explained in a little. But he might have been a little more modest, in the way of bringing forth his above
above view of the verse; as it cannot be supposed to have ever struck
into the mind of any other mortal. It is boldly forced in to serve a
purpose; without the smallest countenance to it being so much as
pretended,—from any other translator, interpreter, critic or
commentator who ever existed: Nor can it be entertained by any
person, who pays a proper regard to his Bible.

All the reason that he gives for his being clear about it, lies in
two corrections of the text, (even, upon the matter, of the original text
itself, though hitherto unquestioned): Corrections quite inconsistent,
that both of them cannot have place; but, if the one will not serve his
purpose,—the other, he supposes, may.

His first correction, with his commentary intermixed, is as
follows, viz. “Though thou Israel hast played the harlot, Judah should
not have offended, by imitating thy example, and thus hardening thee in
thy wickedness; but grant that Judah has offended, do not, ye men of
Israel, embolden yourselves in your idolatries by their confederacy with
you in sin; Come not to Gilgal, neither go ye up to Beth-aven, nor
swear before your idols, The Lord liveth:” And so, they were called to
leave Judah alone in that wickedness. But this pretty correction may be
somewhat spoiled, by considering,—that (in direct contradiction to the
next two verses) it makes the Lord to give up with
Judah
as the
desperate sinners; and to take on with
Israel
a s  i  n  a  m  o  r e  h  o  p e  f u l
case!—And it must be quite spoiled, from this consideration; that the
Hebrew text, and even in the strongest manner that the Hebrew
language is capable of,—determines the first clause about
Israel
to
respect the
present
time, and the next clause about
Judah
to respect the
future
time: While the above correction wholly depends, on making
them both respect the
past
time.

His second correction, with his intermixed commentary, is as
follows, viz. “Or, the words will bear this translation,—If thou Israel
play the harlot, shall not Judah offend by imitating your example?
Therefore come ye not any more to Gilgal, neither go ye up to Beth-
aven, nor swear The Lord liveth: I appeal to such as understand
Hebrew, for the translation.” But how will the words bear this
translation? Just the same way that the Bible bears, through divine
forbearance, all the other abuse which has been committed upon it.—
This new correction depends on turning the clause about
Judah
into a
question, without the smallest shadow of a foundation or allowance for
it in the original text; just as any doctrine or direction in all the Bible
may be overthrown, by an arbitrary turning of it into a question*:
While

* A more effectual method was never devised, for abolishing all certainty,
and so all sacredness of the Hebrew Scriptures; than a turning passages of them, as
men think proper, into the form of

questions
this question at the same time perverts the first clause, by turning it off
from meaning any charge of wickedness against Israel; as if it were
only a warning against the same! And his appeal, in this matter, “to
such as understand Hebrew,” (which, if he understands it, he knows to
be all against him in the present case),—is no better than a sorry
artifice, for getting the ignorant to take his forged translation upon his
own word.

But

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questions,—where (as in the present case) no word nor letter nor point, in the
original text, gives any reason or warrant for doing so: Seeing, at this rate, they
may be turned any way to every one’s fancy, like a nose of wax. Every person who
reverences the divine authority of these Scriptures, and peruses the last section of
the eminent Mr Boston’s Tractatus Stigmologicus,—must abhor all freedoms of
that sort: Being what he speaks of with just indignation, as an applying the force of
the interrogative engine; for obliging the text to speak, not as the Holy Spirit
intended, but as every man would have it.

The Surveyor furnishes another example of this way of dealing,
immediately after the words last quoted from him: “And I only refer to the 14th
verse, for an example of the reasonableness of making these words, Let not Judah
offend, a question. Verse 14; I will not punish your daughters, when they commit
whoredom: Translated in the way of interrogation, with some of the best critics, the
verse would begin thus; Shall I not punish your daughters when they commit
whoredom? How much easier, and more noble is the sense! And pray, what should
render such a translation improper, in the passage under present consideration?”—
A handsome way, truly, of dealing with his Bible! If a question be proper in
another verse, why not in this? If one text may be injured, by the help of the
interrogative engine; why not another also?

It is true, that though he has no countenance from any,—for his question in
the 15th verse; he has a little from some, as to the question in the 14th. But from
whom? “Some of the best critics,” says he. And who are these?—why; he has
Junius and Tremellius for him, in their Latin translation: Which when printed at
London in 1593, had a caution prefixed to it; bearing that their version had many
things internixed which favour of human wit, many things not to be approved.

And whom else has he? He has Piscator; who also was pleased to turn
these word into a question: But without alleging any reason for it in the original
text. And our last translators (in Piscator’s life-time) gave a place to that reading
on the margin, but only introduced with an or; not (like those introduced with an
Heb.) as having any foundation in the Hebrew text.—and Gataker (a member of
the Westminster Assembly, who had an established character as a critic) had some
manuscript translation, which turned the words into a question: Yet he honestly
rejected it, as not agreeing to the original.

But
But with regard to the whole,—his authority is by far too slight for abandoning the only way of translation that is known to have been ever heard of before in any Christian Church; especially when it is the only way that the original text can admit of: That way according to which, by the last five verses of the chapter, (as the contents prefixed to it in our translation do express); \textit{Judah is exhorted to take warning by Israel’s calamity.}

And what could tempt him, to use such a scandalous freedom with the text? Why; it was to get “the argument quite spoiled, so far as it refers to Seceders.” And would he spoil that argument, at the expence of spoiling the dictates of the Holy Ghost? This indeed he has done, as to the text now under consideration; and yet, after all, he has not got that argument “quite spoiled.” The general state of it still remains firm, upon a \textit{parity of reason}: That if an oath, as good in the terms of it as any that was ever sworn since God created the heavens and the earth, and which was of divine appointment in other circumstances,—could not be lawfully sworn in such circumstances, as did give it an \textit{implicit} reference to a corrupt profession and establishment of religion; as little, at least, can the Burgess-oath be lawfully sworn,—in such circumstances as do give it an \textit{express} reference of that sort.

4. The Surveyor makes another bold, but vain effort, to get the argument from the disputed text “quite spoiled,”—as to either parallel or parity of reason: While he teaches, concerning the oath mentioned in it, as sworn at \textit{Gilgal and Beth-aven;} that it respected “not Jehovah but idols,—ascribing life to dead idols.” He for once makes a supposition of the swearers “at best worshipping Jehovah by graven images;” But this he soon retracts, stating the matter absolutely as above.

The church of the ten Tribes was, at this time very bad; yet the honour of the Burgess-oath cannot be a sufficient reason, for calling them a great deal worse than the truth. They profane-

...
ly mingled the worship of the true God with idolatrous rites; they associated dead idols with him in their worship, or worshipped him by them: They gave the wicked example (Zeph. i. 5.), of swearing by the LORD and by Malcham.

But they are basely reproached, by alleging that they transferred the name JEHOVAH to any of their idols; and so meant any of these, by the oath in the text. For, even at their worst, the distinction was preserved betwixt JEHOVAH and their idols; as in the text last referred to. Yea, this distinction was universally maintained in the common language of that people: Otherways Elijah’s language had not been intelligible by them, when he said (1 Kings xviii. 21.); How long halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD (JEHOVAH) be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.

Yet, even supposing the worst, the hated argument still remains firm,—upon the good words of the oath itself; as before expressed.

5. The Surveyor makes his capital attempt for getting the argument “quite spoiled,” in all respects,—by another piece of terrible doctrine, about the condition of the ten Tribes: As he tells, that “Judah was the ONLY CHURCH of the God of Israel, after the revolt of the ten Tribes;” for “Israel, that is, the ten tribes, UNCHURCHED themselves by this separation;” they no longer “continued to profess materially the same religion which was professed in Judah.”

Matters indeed went very far with them, during the subsistence of their separate kingdom,—as to their casting off the Lord, and as to his casting them off: But that the casting off did ever then come the length of being absolute, on either side,—is certainly very new doctrine, without any real foundation in Scripture. The Catholic visible church, under the Old Testament dispensation, has hitherto been considered as comprehending all the seed of Jacob; so far as not finally carried out of the land which the Lord had promised to their fathers: And his method of dealing with the ten Tribes, in their separate kingdom, cannot consist with a different view of the case.

He privileged them with some of the most eminent Prophets, and with schools of the Prophets; and kept up a succession of Prophets among them, of whom Hosea was one: By all which, (as Mr Hutcheson expresses it, in the argument of his exposition on Hosea’s prophesy) he did “keep up some face of a Church among them, during the time of his patience toward them.” As he often did great things for them, so he wonderfully appeared among them, in one of their worst times (1 Kings xviii. 36.); for maintaining his gracious character, as being still God in Israel. He even then testified concerning them; I have reserved unto myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.
Baal. Yea he testified an express acknowledgment of the whole house of Israel, along with the whole house of Judah. Jer. xiii. 11. And however grievously they transgressed the law of Moses, they were kept from renouncing all profession of it; or all profession of “materially the same religion which was professed in Judah.”

Yet the Surveyor is not afraid to trample upon all this gracious sovereignty toward them; by declaring them unchurched: That their revolt from the House of David, was a revolt to absolute Heathenism; that they thereupon became a part of the Gentile world, without the pale of the visible Church; and that all the succession of Prophets, with all the schools of the Prophets, in the kingdom of Israel,—belonged to a state of mere Heathens!

This is indeed a terrible pass that matters are driven to, for the sake of the Burgess-oath; but this is not all.—If the ten Tribes were unchurched, heathenized; by the lengths which they were left to go in having “renounced the true religion” and in having “made idolatry a fundamental law of their religious constitution;” so that these were to be considered as corruptions taking place without the verge of the visible Church, (which is more than has yet been said, about the idolatrous corruptions of the Church of Rome): The consequence must have been the same, upon the like corruptions taking place among the other two Tribes in the kingdom of Judah.

The first King of Judah, after the revolt of the ten Tribes,—forsook the Law of the LORD, and all Israel with him (2 Chron. xii. 1.); all his subjects, then comprehended in the general name Israel. Among the nineteen Kings which succeeded him in Judah, thirteen were more or less tainted with idolatry: Which came to an amazing height under some of them, as Ahaz and Manasseh; so that altars were built for idols, even in the Courts of the LORD’S House at Jerusalem, 2 Chron. xxviii. 1,—4. xxxiii. 1,—10. And many years after the kingdom of Israel had fallen, there was often a dreadful prevalence of idolatry in the kingdom of Judah; a general worshipping of Baal and other idol gods, a swearing by the LORD and by Malcham, Jer. vii. 9. xi. 13, 17. xxxii. 29. Zeph. i. 5.

Now the consequence is inevitable, from the Surveyor’s way of reasoning about the ten Tribes; that the other two were likeways, in the same manner, unchurched or heathenized. And thus, the whole being of the visible Church, for several ages of the Old Testament dispensation; the whole mystery of divine patience and gracious sovereignty, in those ages, toward the seed of Jacob; and the whole glory of divine faithfulness, as to the antient promises then in force concerning them: All is sacrificed, at once, to the infamous purpose of spoiling a particular argument; against a present swearing, by Seceders, of the religious clause in some Burgess-oaths.
Section VII. Of the Surveyor’s false Doctrine about the Secession-Testimony.

If ever any plea was self-condemned, the one in favour of some Burgess-oaths is remarkably of that character: While it professedly maintains the consistency of them, with the present state and circumstances of the Testimony for religion and reformation; yet practically runs down that Testimony, in the present state and circumstances thereof, because of its inconsistency with these oaths. The Surveyor has distinguished himself, in this shameful course; vainly presuming upon the countenance which he finds for doing so,—in an infamous Act of his Synod, concerning the scope and design of the Secession.

I. For the sake of these Burgess-oaths, he tramples the Judicial Testimony among his feet. Some instances hereof, particularly concerning the settlement of religion at the Revolution, have been already considered*; but these are not all.

The calumnious reflection lands upon that Testimony; when he says (p. 39.),—“I know that some can go far in the arts of calumny and detraction, especially where the credit of the Revolution-Church is concerned.” He subtilely denies (p. 6.),—“That our ancestors between 1640 and 1650 were advancing in Reformation-work, but since the Revolution we are declining from the cause of truth and holiness.” As he in like manner denies (p. 17.), concerning the Revolution-Settlement,—“that the Parliament had only ratified religion in a lame, imperfect manner.” And (p. 21.) he introduces the wild supposition, which has been exposed in the first Appendix of this Volume; “that the Act Rescissory of 1661, with many other wicked laws against the Reformation,—were included in the general repealing clauses of the Acts of Parliament 1690.”

II. After the despight which the Surveyor has done in his Preface, to all solemn Covenanting,—with all renovation and obligation of solemn Covenants; it comes of course, that he treats those of our reforming ancestors with disregard and contempt; reproaching the Secession-Testimony as if it patronized, or at least admitted of such behaviour toward them; though it is expressly, and very eminently stated in behalf of those solemn Covenants.

An attachment to the Covenanting-work in the last period of Reformation, is basely but artfully reproached by him (p. 9, 10.); as if it meant “to receive the true religion upon the credit of men,” instead of receiving it “upon the credit of that authority it has in the writings of inspiration,—to make former practice,” instead of these writings, “the rule of future Re-

“formation.”

*p. 333.—336.
“formation,”—And this attachment he inveighs against, by such sutile arguings as these (p. 10, 11.); “does Covenanting make any difference at all, in the system of true religion? The true religion sworn to in the last century is professed, though not by oath, in this century; the substance is the same in both:—And if it is professed in the Revolution Church, as it was once delivered to the saints in the oracles of God; it is of the less weight with me, that it is not now professed under this precise notion, of having been formerly professed and sworn to.”

The impiety of his reasoning would not draw so deep, if it were only an apologizing for the non-renewing of our Solemn Covenants in this period. But it is a professing of religion now, without any regard to the perpetual obligation of these Covenants,—a having that obligation wholly discarded, and all memory of them buried, in the present profession of religion; it is nothing less than this that he dares to argue for, after the above manner,—in a fearful contradiction to the holy Scriptures, and the many concurring testimonies which have been sealed by the blood of our Martyrs: Yet as if such arguing were agreeable to the Secession-Testimony!—He has reason in this case, to tremble at the cry of these souls under the altar.

III. He ignorantly dogmatizes as follows (p. 32.); “The original design of the Secession was ONLY to testify against a prevailing course of practical defection, carried on by a corrupt majority,—this is the plain state of the Secession, in all the writings they emitted upon the subject:—They acknowledged that their Secession would have been a criminal schism, if it had arisen from any cause except corrupt administration; consequently, their Testimony was lifted up against corrupt managements.”—The plain scope of all this loose language is, to represent the Secession-Testimony,—as having never been brought to any further state than what did lie in the first declaring of the Secession, on the 16th of November 1733; or as having never been extended beyond a testifying against the corrupt managements of that time. And the gross iniquity of this representation shall be exposed, in the following particulars.

1. The rise of the Secession-Testimony was the dawning of a new day; a day which, at first, was only known to the LORD. The original light of it bore but a small proportion to what did afterwards break up: And though the whole progress thereof did, from the beginning, lie open to the divine Wisdom which ordered the same; yet the four Brethren, who were employed as instruments in it, were far from acting upon any preconceived plan. The Lord did lead them by a way that they knew not, from one step to another; without their seeing two steps before them at once: So that they had no apprehension, in the entry, of what the matter would turn out unto; nor the smallest
smallest design, or even inclination that way*. Yea, when the Secession was first declared,—their case was still, in some respect, like what Luther acknowledged of himself; in an advertisement which he prefixed to the first volume of his works, after the first four years of his labouring in the ministry of the Reformation: They were but gradually emerging out of the great darkness of a long and deep apostasy from our Covenanted-Reformation.—And when the Surveyor would take down the Secession-Testimony, to that original design and state of it; he might as well take down the Protestant-Testimony, to a mere contending against the Pope’s Indulgences,—while this was all its original state and design.

2. Though the Secession, as at first declared, did more immediately proceed upon some particular evils of that time; it also took in this general ground, the carrying on a course of defection from our reformed and Covenantated principles: And it lifted up a general Testimony for the principles of the true Presbyterian, Covenantated Church of Scotland; in her doctrine, worship, government and discipline†. And these generals did comprehend all the particular enlargements which were afterwards made of the Secession-Testimony, as reaching back to the time of our last Reformation; in opposition to the Surveyor’s false account, as if it had been confined to the corrupt managements of the prevailing party in the year 1733.

3. There was a further advance, as to the design and state of the Secession,—in the extra-judicial Testimony; which was specially intended for explaining the reasons of Secession, as contained in the protestation which had been entered before the Commission in November 1733‡. For, in that Testimony,—some particular evils, which had not been mentioned in the former contentings with the Judicatories, were yet brought in among the reasons of the Secession: And these reasons were introduced by “some historical observes on the state of the Church of Scotland, both in her reforming and declining periods;” by which an entrance was made, upon a further enlargement of the Secession-Testimony.

4. When the Associate Presbytery came to agree upon lifting up the standard of a Judicial Testimony; they determined, in the entry, upon “tracing the defections of this Church as far back as the year 1650||;” which was agreeable to the connexion mentioned in that Testimony§, betwixt having “the sins of the present times particularly mourned over;” and a “faithful enquiry into,” with an “acknowledgment of the defections and backslidings of former periods.”—And any person who considers the said Testimony, may readily wonder how the

* Vol. I. p. 29. † Vol. I. p. 35. 45, 46. ‡ Ibid. 37.—46.
the Surveyor got a face for uttering this fiction; that “the plain state of
the Secession, in all the writings they emitted upon the subject,—was
ONLY to testify against a prevailing course of practical defection,
carried on by a corrupt majority” in the present time.

5. The chief advance, as to the design and state of the Secession,
which had been made in the Judicial Testimony,—was soon after
confirmed, by a new Formula of questions for Ordination-vows;
subjoined to the Preface of the preceding volume: Which new Formula
the Associate Presbytery agreed upon; in place of the questions and
Formula used by the Established Church, as agreed upon by the
Assembly 1711. For (beside some material additions in the new
Formula, relative to the Secession-cause), there are several wide
differences betwixt these two:—While the old questions and Formula
take no notice of our Confession, as received by the Assembly 1647;
and embrace it as ratified by law in the year 1690: They take no notice
of our Larger and Shorter Catechisms: They take no notice of the
propositions concerning Church-government, which were received by
the Assembly 1645: They take no notice of our Solemn Covenants, nor
of the Covenanting-period; more than if these had never been: And
they take no notice of our Presbyterial worship, government and
discipline, as covenanted or as sworn to in our Covenants; but only as
“presently authorised and practiced,—and now so happily established.”

6. When the Associate Presbytery made their Declinature, in the
year 1739; they came “to declare themselves more fully and plainly,
with respect to the present Judicatories, than they had hitherto done:”
And so, they directly avowed themselves to be in a state of Secession
from the whole organized body of the present national Church;—as
“they did and hereby do decline all authority, power and jurisdiction,
which any of the Judicatories of this national Church may claim to
themselves over this Presbytery, or any of the members thereof; or over
any who have subjected themselves to their Presbyterial oversight or
inspection*.”—Accordingly, about this time, they gave over
ministerial communion with all ministers of the Established Church;
and would no longer admit any who remained in communion with that
Church, to hold communion with them also in sealing ordinances.

7. After all, neither the Associate Presbytery nor Synod ever
pretended,—that the Secession ought to have been made any sooner
than the four Brethren were led to make it, in November 1733. The
evils of the Revolution-Settlement, were indeed taken in among the
grounds of the Secession; as among those evils against which the
Secession-Testimony was lifted up†: But not

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as the said evils existed in the year 1690, and for above forty years afterwards; or otherwise than according to the aggravated state which all had come to, in the year 1733. The Surveyor, then, is a mere slanderer; when he represents the Synod (p. 2.) as having ever offered to prove,—that the profession and settlement of religion, in the Established Church, should not have been fallen in with “either at or since the Revolution.” —And he further acts in the same base character; when he represents them (p. 17.) as finding fault with the Revolution Church for embracing, as well as for not duly improving the merciful deliverance then wrought,—even making it “very criminal in the Church of Scotland to profess and practise the true religion, under the general protection of these laws that effectually screen her from all danger in such profession and practice.”

IV. The Surveyor seems to know no bounds of abusing the Secession-Testimony, in behalf of Burgess-oaths; when he runs into the monstrous revery,—of representing the questions and formula enacted by the Assembly 1711, as being the proper ground-work of that Testimony. He pretends (p. 32.) that the first Seceding Ministers—“on all occasions represented their secession, as an adherence to the true religion presently professed and legally authorised in Scotland; defined in the questions and formula foresaid:” And (p. 87.) that this “is the professed object, scope and design of the whole of their testimony and contendings in a way of secession.”

It were very strange, indeed, if the Secession-Testimony had such a fundamental respect to the said questions and formula; (especially considering the view which has been given of them): while these are not so much as once mentioned, in any one paper belonging to it; but a very different formula was introduced into their place! And there is nothing more plain, than that this Testimony was neither stated upon the said formula-ground; nor yet upon the Revolution-ground, about twenty years before: But that it went about forty years still farther back, to the Reformation-ground; taking up the Reformation-standard where it began to fall, in 1650.—By what method of reasoning, then, does he try to impose such a barefaced forgery upon the world? Just by this: That the first seceding Ministers declared a continued adherence to their ordination-vows in the Established Church; and these vows respected the said questions and formula in 1711; and so, this must be the ground upon which the Secession-Testimony is stated! Strange reasoning, indeed; as will be evidenced in a little.

V. As the Surveyor tries to befool the understanding of his reader, in favour of Burgess-oaths,—by a senseless declaiming about the true religion; he takes the same course for befooling the Secession-Testimony: While he pays it a deceitful compliment in
this matter, of a vindication from a charge which no body ever laid against it.—“According to the Antiburghers” (says he p. 22.), “the Testimony lifted up by Seceders was taken up against the true religion presently professed—and legally authorised:” And (p. 23.) he represents their charge against “the Burghers” to be,—“because they cannot disallow with their heart, the true religion presently professed within the realm, and authorised by law in the Church of Scotland.” In opposition to all which, he there tells it as “undeniable; that the Secession-Testimony was not originally intended against the true religion presently professed in the Revolution-church, and authorised by the laws of the land.” But that (p. 29.) “the Seceders always meant to adhere to the true religion presently professed in the Revolution-church of Scotland, and authorised by the laws of that realm.”

Now it is to be remembered, that he all along means (as he distinguishes it by capitals, p. 29.),—“The TRUE RELIGION ITSELF, which is professed in the Revolution-church of Scotland and legally authorised in that realm.” As hath been formerly considered,—he lays aside the present professing and authorising, from being of any consideration in this whole matter. And what does he mean by the true religion itself? not “any thing more” than “the true scriptural system of pure and undefiled religion,” abstracting from “the mode of professing it,” p. 2. 11. 13.

What then is the amount of all his above reasoning? Just this,—That the Secession-Testimony was not originally intended against the Bible, and our subordinate Reformation-standards; but that the Seceders always meant to adhere unto these! And did “the Antiburghers” ever say a word, to the contrary of this?—did they ever pretend, that the Testimony was taken up against the Bible and these other standards? did they ever find fault with “the Burghers,” because they could not heartily disallow of all these?

He indeed loads them with the blackest calumny, as if they had done so. And he profanes the language of the Lord of Glory, in making it a conveyance of such calumny; when he tells in capitals (p. 23.), that FROM THE BEGINNING IT WAS NOT SO,—though it has never been so, to this very day.

VI. He is at great pains to confound the reader, by a deal of senseless jargon; about the continued adherence which the first seceding Ministers declared, to their ordination-vows and engagements in the Established Church.—“All the public writings of the Seceders” (says he p. 85, 86.) “adopt their ordination-vows in the Established Church, according to the formula and questions injoined by the Act of Assembly 1711; and—they represent the Secession as standing on the ground, and prose-

“cuting
“cutting the purposes of these vows.” Accordingly he tells (p. 86, 87.), that “the ordination-vows taken in the Established Church are the object and scope of the Seceding Testimony;” and that “these vows are of the same import with the religious clause of some Burgess-oaths,—bind to nothing more or less, than the religious-clause in some Burgess-oaths does.” Upon all which he treats the Synod with great insolence and scurrility (p. 23, 24. 104.), in the case of their proceedings about the Burgess-oath; as having renounced the said ordination-vows,—and so, “if not the whole, at least a material and express design of the Secession-Testimony.” Defying them, in the stile of a bully (“stand forth, gentlemen, for your work on this head is yet to begin,—libel them freely, and produce your strong proofs), to convince the Burgher Ministers of sin in this matter,”—as to any breach of these vows; and adding, “I know you dare not fairly enter on the argument in this natural state of the question.”——But the utter vanity of all this ranting, is easily exposed.

The first seceding Ministers considered themselves as having generally come under a twofold obligation, by their ordination-vows in the Established Church.—The primary obligation was this, (as expressed in their deed of secession†); “to adhere to the principles of the true Presbyterian, Covenanted Church of Scotland,—in her doctrine, worship, government and discipline:” And, in this respect, they still maintained a stedfast adherence to these vows. “Our secession” (said they‡) “is not from the Church of Scotland: We own her doctrine, contained in her Confession of Faith; we observe the received and approven uniformity of worship; we adhere to her Presbyterian government and discipline, according unto the word of God and our Solemn Covenant-engagements;—and we have not been convicted of any thing, in doctrine or practice, to the contrary.” Accordingly, their Judicial Testimony was stated (in

*Here is a new evidence, of how little credit is due to the Surveyor’s assertions. For as the said formula and questions were never mentioned, in any of these writings; so all the adopting of the said vows just amounts to this: That the Extrajudicial-Testimony, published by the first seceding Ministers, did bear an adherence to these vows,—in pleading that they had not counteracted, but still acted agreeably to the same; and the Judicial Testimony did bear a general adherence to the extrajudicial one, along with their other previous contentings, [Vol. I. p. 163.]. And this general adherence was only to be constructed of, in a consistency with the new advance then made of the Secession-Testimony: While no account was ever made of the said formula and questions or vows, in any licensings or ordainings by the Associate Presbytery.

† Vol. I. p. 35. ‡ Ibid. p. 37.
the very title of it*) “for the doctrine, worship, discipline and government of the Church of Scotland.” Thus, they never pretended to secede from the national Church of Scotland; considered in what they called our beautiful Presbyterian constitution†, and Reformation-standards: But reckoned themselves indispensably bound thereto by their ordination-vows.—And it may be easily granted that, in the above respect, these vows “are the object and scope of the Seceding Testimony; as standing on the ground and prosecuting the purposes of these vows,” with regard to the matter of that primary obligation?

The secondary obligation was this‡; “to subject themselves unto the judicatories of the Church,” in a state of communion with the Established Church: But they reckoned it just and necessary, that this should give place to the other primary obligation; when these two came to interfere. “It is not a blind and implicit obedience” (said they, in the place last referred to) that we bind ourselves unto, but a subjection in the Lord; a subjection qualified and limited by the word of God, and the received and known principles of this Church.” They therefore argued thus, “Our ordination-vows and engagements oblige us to the several steps we have taken.” So that (as there observed) “the same vows which did formerly bind them to communion with the Established Church, did now bind them to secession from her; when they could no longer get themselves exonered with respect to these principles, in a way of communion with her.” They thus reckoned that, by their secession,—instead of breaking or renouncing their ordination-vows, they were properly adhering unto and fulfilling the same.—Yea, when the form of these vows was afterwards corrected and enlarged by them in a new formula; this was so far from a renouncing, that it was an improving and confirming of their adherence to these original vows.

But what is all this to the Surveyor’s purpose? what does he gain to his cause, by all that abuse of the Secession-Testimony which has been considered? Even nothing at all.——He is not indeed ashamed to say, of the ordination-vows in the Established Church, as still adhered unto by the first seceding Ministers; that they “are of the same import with the religious clause in some Burgess-oaths,” and “bind to nothing more or less than” it does. But he may as well deny that it is day in sunshine, as deny that the said clause is an oath of immediate communion with the Established Church§. And did these Ministers still adhere to


§ He makes a vain attempt to get his purpose served by a new method of argument, (p. 32, 33.); in distinguishing “between the constitution and administration of the Revolution-church:”
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the said vows, as vows of such communion?  Are these vows then, as vows of immediate communion with the Established Church, the ground upon which the Secession-Testimony is stated?  Does he think to get such a stupid absurdity imposed upon the world; as that the seceding Ministers did set up on the footing of being in the Established Church, and out of her, and neither in nor out, nor any body can tell what!  Such indeed is all the amount of his present argumentation.

VII. As the zealous honesty of the Reverend Mr Alexander Moncrieff made him particularly obnoxious, in his life-time, to the resentment of those on the side of the Burgess-oath; so the respectable memory of that heavenly man, has not escaped the calumnious virulence of the Surveyor’s pen.

He says (p. 23. 79. 86.),—“About fourteen or fifteen years after the Secession began, and when it was become necessary to serve a party-purpose; Mr Moncrieff publicly revolted from that principle, relating to the obligation of his ordination-vows, so far as these vows had any respect to the Revolution-church:  And at the same time candidly acknowledged, that this revolt was owing to a new and late improvement in his

“knowledge

As if the Secession-Testimony had been lifted up only against corrupt administration, (the falsehood of which pretence has been already exposed); and so could not interfere with the Burgess-oath, which he gives out as only approving of the constitution.  For though no body pretends, (as will be explained in the next section),—that the Burgess-oath is to be considered, in any period, as approving of all particulars in the administration:  Yet common honesty cannot admit of explaining it away from an acknowledging of the administration to be such, as neither requires nor warrants a secession; or such as cannot justly obstruct a persevering in communion with the Established Church.

He pretends that the above distinction is as good for justifying the Burgess-oath, as it was necessary and sufficient for justifying Paul, from the charge of “practising a piece of wicked art; when he cried out in the council,—men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, Acts xxiii. 6.”  But Paul can have no need of the Surveyor’s help to justify him, by such a distinction; when he was simply pleading in self-defence,—that he continued to be speculatively of the same mind with the Pharisees against the Saducees, upon the article of the Resurrection.—And how could such a distinction bear any application to this case; except upon the odd supposition which the Surveyor seems to make,—that he was then homologating the religious constitution of the Pharisees, though formed and maintained in a desperate opposition to the gospel-state!  But, in order to make this case parallel to that of the Burgess-oath, he must go a little further:  He must teach, that Paul was then avouching religious communion with the Pharisees; in opposition to any state of secession from their fellowship?
“knowledge of her iniquity.——The honest candour of Mr Alexander Moncrieff obliged him to renounce his ordination-vows, in order to maintain the decision protested against.——He deserves more honour for his open frank confession of this discovery,—that his ordination-vows were generally contradictory to the Bond for renewing the Covenants,—than all the party he was connected with: For though they must be of his opinion, unless they are self-inconsistent; they have never had the candour or courage to tell the world so much."

For a proof of all this insolent charge, intermixed with malicious compliments, he says; “see Moncrieff's Animadversions, etc. p. 34, 35.” But he had not “the candour or courage” to quote any one passage from these pages, that the Reader might judge for himself: The commentary being by far too disingenuous, for bearing any comparison with the text.

In the pages referred to, Mr Moncrieff writes as follows, viz. “I was not acquainted with the defects and corruptions of the Revolution-settlement; when I subscribed the Formula 1711, at my ordination 1720: Nor even in the years 1733 and 1734; when I was concerned in one of the Representations, and in what is called the first Testimony,—in assenting to them, though I drew none of these papers: And therefore my ordination-vows, and my after declaration of adherence unto them, were consistent with what light I then had. But it is evident to every man that does not shut his eyes, that the Act and Testimony doth, in the plainest terms, lay open and declare against the corruptions of the Revolution-settlement; which I came afterwards to see and learn by the help of my Brethren, the members of the Associate Presbytery: And I approved the said Testimony along with them.”——But was there any acknowledging here, according to the slanderous charge, of his having made some “new and late improvement” (when publishing his Animadversions) in the year 1748; or of any thing beyond what he and his Brethren had come to, when agreeing upon the Judicial Testimony,—in the year 1736? Is any other view given here, than what all of them must have had; when they soon after agreed upon their new Formula, as already represented? And could any of them, with any degree of “honest candour,” have spoken to the contrary of what is above expressed?

Mr Moncrieff proceeds as follows, viz. “Nothing is more evident to me, than that having, in my judgment, agreed to the terms of communion in the Associate Presbytery: I can no more after that subscribe the foresaid Formula 1711, no more than I can renounce the profession I have made upon better information: And no more than I could be in accession to the Established Church, and in secession from her at the same time;—to subscribe her terms of communion, and to be in se-
“cession from her, are quite inconsistent.”—But still, was there any confession here, of his having made a new “discovery” in the year 1748: When only confessing the view which he had, and which all his Brethren must have had, about fourteen or fifteen years before? And is it true, that his Brethren “have never had the candour or courage” (as well as he) “to tell the world,”—that they were in a state of Secession from, and so could not act as in a state of communion with the Established Church?—The Surveyor indeed gives them out, as no better than a pack of knaves or fools; when he represents them as having had another view of matters, contrary to what is above expressed: Or as having ever had freedom, at any time after the 16th of November 1733, to subscribe the said Formula,—expressly bearing an engagement of full communion with the Established Church; or to acknowledge an adherence to their ordination-vows in that respect. For if they acted with any degree of sense and honesty, all of them, from that time, must have disclaimed any such freedom; all being equally liable to these calumnious imputations of revolting and renouncing, by which he tries to blacken the memory of that worthy man.

Section VIII. Of the Surveyor’s corrupt Doctrine, about the Profession of Christianity.

Great lengths the Surveyor has gone, in the passages already considered, for defence of the Burgess-oath against the Synod; great sacrifices he has made to that cause: But he prosecutes the defence of it still further; so as, in favour thereof, to strike at the root of all scriptural and rational measures of a Christian profession,—all proper form and fellowship of the visible Church. And,

I. He takes occasions for this horrid extravagance,—from the Synod’s having made a concession to the following effect, in their answers to the reasons of protest, (Acts and Proceedings, p. 77.): That their objection against swearing the religious clause of some Burgess-oaths in this period, would not have struck against it in the late reforming period.—From what they say on this subject, he makes the following quotation (p. 4.), viz. “The swearing of said clause now, when it generally homologates the present national profession and settlement of religion, must necessarily consent unto what is inseparable from this profession and settlement, viz. a progressive defection: But the swearing of said clause in that period, when it generally homologated the then national profession and settlement of religion, behaved necessarily to consent unto what was inseparable from that profession and settlement, viz. a progressive Reformation; and this was utterly inconsistent with homologating any particular evils there-
“of, that might be found needing Reformation*.”—Such is the view which the Synod had, of the general difference betwixt a swearing of that oath in this and in the former period: Beside the special difference, that the swearers then were justly in a state of communion with the Established Church; whereas the swearers now, whom the Synod has ado with, are justly in a state of Secession from her.

II. The soppish insolence with which the Surveyor quotes and constructs of the above passage, as if it were “shocking to decency and common sense,”—deserves only to be passed over with contempt: It is enough, to consider the argument by which he endeavours a confutation of it.—The substance of his argument (as it hath been represented in his own words, at the close of the fifth section), is this: That there were Imperfections cleaving to the public state of religion in the former period, as well as in this,—of the same general nature, however different in degrees; and that therefore the oath must be as safe now as then,—while it cannot imply an approving of these imperfections in the one period, any more than in the other. “This divine system” (say he, p. 9.) “was but imperfectly understood and but imperfectly stated, even in the purest times of Reformation;—greater or lesser degrees of imperfection do not make any real difference; because they still imply the idea of imperfection at all times:” And so he concludes, “that it was ALWAYS sinful and dangerous to swear it, even in the most improved times of Reformation,—or it may be safely sworn NOW.” But still, even though this way of arguing were good, there is a most real difference remaining in the present case: For, as it is essentially an oath of communion with the Established Church; may it be as safely sworn by those in a state of Secession from her, as by her own members!

For strengthening his above argument, he defames our late Covenanting-period; while (as hath been observed at the beginning of the last section) he makes a doubt of it, “That our ancestors

“between

*Reformation, while it continues, is always in its nature progressive,—according to the progressive nature of administrations in the Church; and the Reformation of the late period was such in a peculiar sense, as not having arrived at the measure then particularly in view: So that the Swearer was then engaged in a progressive Reformation. And defection, while it continues, is always in its nature progressive; being eminently such in this period: So that the Swearer is now involved in a progressive defection.—The absurdity of the Surveyor’s invective, formerly remarked (as if the considering of Reformation and defection under the notion of being progressive,—were the putting of a prophetical sense upon the oath, while it is only a considering of these according to what they really are),—is too gross, for deserving any further notice. See p. 322.
“between 1640 and 1650 were advancing in Reformation-work:” And he scruples not (p. 6.) to lay them under an indefinite charge, in rude terms; of “irreligious sentiments and practices which were then reputed religious.”—Yea, for the sake of the Revolution-Church, he throws out indefinite slander upon all the Churches of Christ in every period. “Where is the Church” (says he) “that can safely pretend she is altogether free of some impure mixture, and criminal additions to the institutions of heaven?—There are, and always have been, many things professed in every Church, since the apostolic age, under the notion of religion and in connection with it, which are foreign to the oracles of God.” Yet Christians needed not to have been informed, especially in such loose and defamatory terms,—that the Church does never, in this world, become a glorious Church; not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

And it is not to be supposed that the Churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia, in the apostolic age, are excepted by him from the lash of such rude imputations; though the Lord Jesus excepted them from any challenge: For even the Apostle Paul does not escape the calumny of his pen.—This he introduces with a florid and false compliment to that Apostle (p. 7.), as having “finished his education in the third heavens;” which was several years before he entered upon any of his epistles: And so, it seems, he wrote all these upon his old stock of learning,—without needing any new instructions from the Holy Ghost who moved him! But, passing further remarks on this piece of bombast, and sequel of it deserves more particular notice; that impious and reproachful gloss which is put upon the Apostle’s words (Acts xx. 27.), “I SHUNNED NOT to declare all the counsel of God.”—The gloss is this, viz. “He would not take upon him to say, that he actually declared all the counsel of God; but judged it sufficient to affirm, that he did not willfully keep back from the Churches any point of Divine-truth: An useful hint certainly to mortals less modest, and yet less deserving; who would be thought to have comprised the whole system of revealed Truth, in their public professions and judicial decisions!”

All commentators hitherto have certainly understood, that this Apostle was now avouching the uprightness with which he had been enabled to perform his ministry; unto a having “actually declared” (however summarily) “all the counsel of God.” But the above gloss must mean Paul’s acknowledging such an imperfection of his ministry, yea of the Holy Spirit’s by him, (upon a failure of the great promise, John xvi. 13.),—as left all the Churches to suppose, that all the counsel of God about the method of salvation was not comprised in his doctrine; but that they had some further articles of it to look for, they knew not now many

and
and how material,—beyond the compass of all that he had written or said!—After all, it is very odd that other mortals should be thus reviled; because they “would be thought to have comprised the whole system of revealed Truth in their public professions;” so far as the whole Bible is therein comprised!

III. From the aforesaid doctrine of *imperfections*, the Surveyor gives a general turn to his argument (p. 14.); as follows, *viz.* “No lawful oath can be taken, to oblige a man to allow with his heart, *without an exception*, the BEST PROFESSIONS that men have ever made of the religion of Christ:—Nor would it be safe to swear an *unlimited approbation* of the whole scheme of the true religion, merely as it was understood and stated by our Covenanting ancestors; because it would be presumption to affirm, that all their views of it were exactly conformable to the oracles of God:——Our Covenanting ancestors understood their own imperfections so well, that they never, I believe, were so weak as to promote or take an oath to approve *their own professions of religion*, without any exception; and to abide by them to their life’s end: This they reckoned too great a compliment to any thing but THE WORDS OF THE HOLY ONE.” And so, according to any sense that can be made of this ambiguous language, a religious Oath or Covenant must alway bear a *twofold exception*: One, with regard to the actual *profession* of the true religion; and another, with regard to the whole scheme thereof which is professed,—as stated in subordinate standards.

With regard to the actual *profession* of the true religion, (the manner of professing or maintaining it in public standards); he is for an *exception* of all this, from belonging to the matter of the Oath or Covenant: While, according to his doctrine about the Burgess-oath (p. 11, 13.), already considered,—it is not “any thing more than the true religion itself,” abstracting from “the mode of professing it,” that is sworn to. Thus (p. 14.) he teaches “the absurdity and iniquity of swearing to human appearances for religion;” He charges it upon the Synod as an error, (p. 24, 25.); that “they consider the Swearer as engaging to approve and abide at an human profession of religion:” And he says, concerning our Reformers (p. 11.); “that their professing, Covenanting, etc. were human things; and so neither the matter—of the Burgess-oath, nor any other lawful oath whatever.”

And with regard to the whole scheme of the true religion which is professed, as stated in subordinate standards; he is also for an *exception* of all these, or of the said scheme as therein stated, from belonging to the matter of the Oath or Covenant. For, according to him, it would not “be safe to swear an *unlimited approbation* of the whole scheme of the true religion” therein set forth by our Covenanting ancestors; “because it would be
“presumption to affirm, that all their views of it were exactly conformable to the oracles of God.” And his language necessarily means, that a swearing to these standards “without any exception,” or with an “indefinite approbation and engagement” (as he explains it, p. 13.),—would be “too great a compliment” to them; “to any thing but the words of the holy One.” These standards are “human things,—human appearances for religion,” and so cannot belong to “the matter of any lawful oath whatever,”—this being confined to what he calls (p. 2.) “the true and scriptural system of pure and undefiled religion.” Accordingly, he dogmatizes in the following manner (p. 13.): “The Holy Scriptures every where set before us perfect patterns, perfect precepts and perfect systems; why then should we forsake the fountain of living waters, and hew out to ourselves broken cisterns? Is not this undeniably the case, when people adopt by solemn oath the professions of men, without excepting their imperfections*?”—And any other way of exception that his words can mean, beside what has been observed, must be some deceitful reservation in the Swearer’s mind.

IV. But what is the real import and effect of all this detestable doctrine? Certainly nothing less than what has been charged, in the entry of this section. For,

1. The

*He immediately adds: “How few possess the modesty of the Apostle of the Gentiles, who said to the Churches; Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ, 1 Cor. xi. 1.” And so this Apostle is again dragged in, for another profanation of his words: As if, when calling Christians to imitate him in following Christ; he had possessed the modesty of leaving them to do so, with whatever exception they might think proper!

Nor can the Surveyor be reconciled with himself, as to the commendation which he bestows on the holy scriptures,—in exeeing them from the charge of being imperfect, so as they should need no exception to be made in the approbation of them; considering his express definition of what he means by imperfect, in the present argument: “My meaning is” (says he, p. 9.), “that the heads, doctrines and duties of revealed Truth, were never fully enumerated, nor perfectly stated in all their connections.” A fine definition, truly, of imperfection! And does the Scripture contain no imperfection of this sort? Does it contain no generals; no Mine, out of which materials are to be dug and formed; no positions, from which consequences are to be drawn: Nothing but a mere system of particulars; “fully enumerated,—perfectly stated in all their connections?” Then it seems, no room has been left for any use of either books or sermons; by way of explaining, particularizing, or stating the connections of Scripture-truths!
1. The above doctrine about religious oaths, is of a general nature; equally applicable to all cases of public vowing or Covenanting, in matters of religion,—and to all cases of espousing subordinate standards in a Church. Yea, it is equally applicable to all cases of professing the true religion; or of holding communion with any Church in that profession: For any profession or communion which a man cannot warrantably swear to, on a proper occasion,—he can as little warrantably make or hold it, on any occasion whatever.

2. The above doctrine, therefore, strikes at the root of all subordinate Standards in any Church,—all Confessions or Directories; all Tests of orthodoxy and soundness in the faith, that can be formed by any Church-judicatures. No man may come under an engagement to these “human things,” these “human appearances for religion;” at least without some exception,—which can amount to nothing else than some mental reservation, and juggling equivocation. An engagement, without some such exception, would be “too great a compliment” to these human systems,—“to any thing but the words of the Holy One; the perfect patterns, perfect precepts and perfect systems,” which the holy Scriptures every where set before us.

And where will this land? For translations of the Scripture are “human things,” as to the words thereof; which can never be reckoned perfect: And so, for the words of the Holy One, recourse must be had to the Hebrew and Greek originals. But even here, there are different ways of understanding these words; or of taking up the doctrines which they contain. Yet these doctrines must not be stated and ascertained, in opposition to errors or heretics,—by any Confessions or Directories which men should be engaged unto, without some such exception as would make them good for nothing; because this would be to “forsake the fountain of living waters, and hew out to ourselves broken cisterns.”

The sum of all is, that there must be no “swearing to human appearances for religion,”—no confining of men to any standards of human composure. There must be no unlimited engagement, but to the originals of the Bible; and all errors or heresies, which are broached under a pretence of owning the Bible, must be left to a prevalence without control. All form and fellowship of the visible Church, as the pillar and ground of the truth, in a state of opposition to any errors or heresies,—must be abolished: There must be no attempt to maintain the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God.

3. The above doctrine strikes against all joint profession of Christianity; all union and communion of Christians, in that profession.—For, as hath been observed, what a person may not swear he may not hold: And he may not swear a concurrence in any common
common or public profession, even “the best professions,” either objectively or subjectively considered; at least without some equivocating exception,—by which every one must be left utterly at a loss, about another’s harmony with him in that matter. One is never to be considered as under an engagement to “an human profession of religion,” or to the public “mode of professing it;” but each is to be considered, as at freedom to entertain some distinguished profession of his own: By which the professing Church-body is dissolved, into a mere mob of detached individuals; divested of all scripture-characters in their profession,—as to their being one bread and one body, of one heart and of one soul, of one spirit with one mind, and of one faith, with one accord.—They are to have no unity of faith and profession. But only as all owning the Bible; left loose to their various ways of thinking about it. And whatever appearance any religious oath or engagement they come under may have to the contrary, it is always to be interpreted according to the foregoing principles!

V. The wild and wicked doctrine which has been considered, is a gross outrage upon the principles and conduct of all the reformed Churches; particularly of the reforming Church of Scotland.—Nothing is more unquestionable, than that “our covenanting ancestors” did “promote” and “take an oath to approve their own professions of religion,—and to abide by them to their life’s end;” that “their profession,” however far among “human things,” was “the matter” of their oath in solemn Covenanting*: Or that their manner of stating and maintaining the truths and institutions of the gospel, in a proper opposition to manifold errors and corruptions,—was the very thing to which they did immediately swear.

With regard to our old or large Confession at the first Reformation, and the form of religion then established,—the short Confession or national Covenant, in 1581, did bear the following clause; “To the which Confession and form of religion we willingly agree in our conscience, in all points.” And the oath of the Bond, in 1638, did bear the following clause: “We promise and swear, by the great name of the Lord our God, to continue in the profession and obedience of the foresaid religion,—as is expressed in the Confession of Faith above-written” (viz. the National Covenant in 1581); “and a former Large Confession, established by sundry acts of lawful Assemblies and of Parliaments.”—And the case was the same, in all the reformed Churches; as to the solemn engagements by which their several Confessions of faith were espoused.

*The Surveyor is right for once, that their Covenanting was not the matter of their oath in Covenanting; was not, nonsensically, the matter of itself!
And how could they do otherwise, without the grossest deceit and vanity?—For a general engagement to the Bible, or to “the true scriptural system of pure and undefiled religion,”—this could serve no purpose at all, as a test of orthodoxy or unity in the faith; while all prevailing errors and corruptions did take shelter under the common pretence of being agreeable to such a general engagement. It was the stating of scripture-truths and institutions, by subordinate Standards, in a special opposition to those errors and corruptions; it was this immediately, or nothing at all,—to which they could reasonably swear, or come under solemn engagements.

The question may now be put, did they so “without any exception?” And the answer is, by no means; though without any such exception as the Surveyor would have.—A general exception is manifestly implied in the nature of the thing; while these Standards were sworn to, only as subordinate. For this necessarily bears an exception of whatever they could be found to contain inconsistent with the word of God, the supreme Standard: So that, if any such thing should ever afterwards be found; the swearer was not to be considered as bound thereto by his oath. But then, if he swore with any honesty, he disclaimed all apprehension or suspicion of any such thing at the time: He took the doctrine of these Standards, without any such exception, (as expressed in the National Covenant concerning our old Confession),—to be “God’s undoubted truth and verity, grounded only upon his written word.”——Agreeably to all which, even the Surveyor’s favourite Formula 1711, bears this clause: “I do sincerely own and believe the whole doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith,—to be the truths of God; and I do own the same as the confession of my faith.” Could he then have argued as he does, but from gross ignorance about the concerns and duties of a Church-state?

But the Surveyor has yet another string upon which he often strikes (p. 9.12, 13. 15. 20. 25. 27, 28.), though very impertinently, in the present argument. As he most absurdly refuses, that the Burgess-oath means any approving of the profession and settlement of the true religion; so he boldly denies the warrantableness of avouching, by a general oath, the said profession and settlement in any period: From this consideration, that it would mean an approving of “the mode and circumstances,—all the complex circumstances,—every mode and circumstance” of the said profession and settlement; though there were always some imperfections of these, “even in the most improved times of Reformation.”—But this is only a piece of poor sophistry, under which he shelters himself. For the general oath can mean an approving of any imperfections, defects or evils of the profession and settlement,—or not; just according as these give the prevailing
prevailing colour and denomination thereto,—or not: That is, according as the profession and settlement are in a state of defection or reformation. And a swearing of communion with the Established Church, in her profession and settlement, cannot any further approve the “mode and circumstances” thereof,—than a holding of the said communion does: While it only means, that the swearer sees nothing so far wrong in the said “mode and circumstances,”—as can require or warrant a secession from her. Nor is it possible, according to any other way of viewing the matter, that there should ever be such a thing as religious swearing or Church-communion under heaven.—Such is the vast odds betwixt swearing the Burgess-oath in this period of defection, and in the former period of reformation. And now let the Surveyor sport himself with his own deceivings; as if this doctrine were “shocking to decency and common sense!”

Section IX. Of the Surveyor’s Corrupt Doctrine about Civil Establishments of Religion.

The Surveyor’s pernicious doctrines about the profession of religion, have been examined; and his new doctrine, no less pernicious, about civil establishments of it,—is now to be taken under consideration. He has the assurance to write as follows, (p. 35.): “My principles about the power of Christian civil rulers in matters of religion, are exactly consonant to the opinion of the Associate Presbytery in their Answers to Mr Nairn; and of Messrs Gib, Morison and Graham.” Yet all these parties, whom he would thus drag over to his side, are grossly calumniated,—by the pretence of their having ever shewed any favour to his detestable principles on this subject; as will be evident, from a proper view of these principles. And,

I. He makes the following declaration, (preface p. 3.), viz. “I have long wished to see that foolish part of the dispute, which relates to the kind and manner of settling religion in Scotland by Acts of Parliament, thrown entirely out of the controversy: I have attempted it in the following sheets; the success of my endeavours must be left with the readers.” Endeavours correspondent to the Endeavourer, in some bold and loose assertions!—And it is observable, that he is not here pretending to plead the cause of his own party; as through the rest of his performance: But he treats both parties as having acted like a parcel of fools, in the whole matter of this dispute. For, upon giving a sketch of his new principles concerning it, he says (p. 21.); “Had these plain truths been duly attended to, I apprehend we should have seen, at least one material branch of the Burgess-oath controversy, managed in all sides in another manner than it has been.”

II. His
II. His present attempt, for giving instruction to all these fools,—is partly in the way of casting reproaches upon the principles of all the reformed Churches, about that affair: And some particular notice may be taken of these reproaches, in this place; though they will be obviated, upon the matter, by the general principles which will come to be laid down in the last article of this section. As,

1. He tells (p. 15.), that “No civil magistrate has any right to prescribe unto or control the Church; in any point respecting doctrine, worship or government; while she does not exceed the limits of her province, nor encroach upon the safety of the state.”—And did the Synod ever give him any reason to suppose them of a different mind? Yet he brings in the above, as an argument against them: Yea, he expressly charges them with the opposite Erastian principle; as will be observed a little.

2. By a quotation (p. 16.) from a pamphlet, which he mentions as said to have been written by “the Reverend Mr Graham an Antiburgher Minister.”—he traduces civil establishments of religion in general; as if they meant a having the Established Church kneaded into and made a part of the civil constitution.—But that writer is basely injured, by an application of his words to the case now in hand. For he speaks about “national establishments of one denomination and party of Christians, to the manifest prejudice of others in their civil rights;” having “the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ” accompanied with “the heterogeneal and absurd aid of the civil sword:” Establishments whose “grandeur and prosperity consist in the riches and excessive revenues of the clergy, in their power and pride, their lust of domination, and inhuman persecution of Dissenters.” Neither the Synod, nor any member thereof, have ever shewed the least favour to such establishments.

3. He says (p. 17, 18.), “The Antiburghers—allow the civil magistrate a power to judge of doctrine, worship and discipline, by the word of God; and to put a negative on the practices of Church-members, and even on her judicial decisions, when they respectively depart from that word: Westminster Confession, chap. xxiii. §. 3.”——Some notice has been taken formerly*, of this abominable falsehood; for which he offers no proof, but the above reference to the Westminster Confession: So that the wicked reproach falls wholly on that Confession.

The whole passage of it referred to, is as follows, viz. “The Civil Magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven: Yet he hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blas-

“phemies

* p. 336.
“Phemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed; and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered and observed. For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call Synods, to be present at them; and to provide, that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God.”——Such is that article in the Westminster Confession; which the Surveyor has renounced, in the above manner,—for himself and all his party: Leaving it wholly at the door of “the Antiburghers.” And is this the account which he makes of his ordination-vows (as also of his beloved formula 1711), with regard to that Confession!

Yet what foundation has he, in the article now quoted, for his charge against it and the Associate Synod? Even no shadow of any; but all the contrary.—For what he says they “allow the civil Magistrate,” as it respects public judgment,—most evidently belongs to “the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven;” which is expressly refused to the civil magistrate, in the beginning of this article: So that he can find no ground therein for his charge, without proving it inconsistent with itself; which he will never be able to do.

It mentions several things, as what the Magistrate is impowered and obliged “to take order and to provide” for. Yet there is not a word about his doing so immediately at his own hand, but only through the intervention of Synods; in whatever belongs to “the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven:” Or further than as it lies immediately within his own sphere, to suppress errors and practices that strike against the manifest principle of natural religion, as principles which lie at the root of the peace and order of civil society. Nor is there a word about his exercising a judicial control over Synods, in ecclesiastical matters; or dealing with them by compulsive means: Nor any thing beyond what is sufficiently practicable by the high and powerful influence which belongs to his station,—exercised without any compulsion, in a conformity to his own private judgment; for exciting and encouraging them to faithfulness on the one hand, and discouraging or discountenancing them on the other*.——At the same time, with regard to the Scriptures quoted upon that article from the Old Testament; the Confession does not acknowledge any standing applicableness of these to the state of matters under the New Testament, beyond what is comprehended in the terms of the article.

What has been said is sufficient for wiping off the aforesaid foul reproach, which the Surveyor has cast upon the Confession of Faith: And there cannot be proper room here, for a more particular discussion of that subject.

4. He

4. He teaches (p. 18.),—that “the system of doctrine, worship, government and discipline of the Christian Church must be embodied into the laws of the state, and become the municipal laws of national jurisprudence; before the state can act as a co-ordinate power within the Church, in promoting reformation*: Because the state is always understood to act upon its own principles, and to distribute rewards and punishments in conformity only to its own laws.”——Fine doctrine, truly; that the state cannot countenance and encourage the Christian religion without abolishing it, by turning it into civil law! Might he not as well teach,—that a ship-master could not exert his influence for promoting Christianity among his crew, without turning it into a branch of navigation?

5. He adds (p. 18.), concerning the state’s acting as a co-ordinate power with the Church in promoting Reformation: “It infers, that worldly emoluments and corporal punishments should be distributed to men, according to their religious character; notwithstanding the numerous intimations the faithful Witness has given his disciples, that in the world they shall have tribulation.” But this, again, depends on the wild notion,—of turning religion into civil law: And civil powers, according to him, (or according to any sense which his words can bear in their connection), have got a very new piece of duty carved out for them; that they ought to oppress and harass the disciples of Christ, for the sake of fulfilling the Scriptures†!

6. He proceeds thus (p. 19.): “If the parliament really ought to take order that the system of Scripture-doctrine, the worship; and all the ordinances of God, be duly settled, adminstred and observed through the whole nation, according to the mind of God; it is but a trivial matter, whether they take any notice of the foregoing decisions of the Church, or not; The mind of God is the parliament’s rule even in the opinion of the objectors.”—A trivial matter then it is with him, whether the Parliament should countenance and encourage the Church in her proper work; or should make themselves the Church! And though the mind of God, in the gospel-revelation, is the proper rule of private

*p. 336, 337.

† For palliating his scurrilous abuse of a performance called THE CRITERION, (written and published by one of a private character),—he makes a downright lie upon it; by giving out a quotation from it, as what the author affirms concerning “the period of Reformation between the years 1640 and 1650:” Whereas it is there expressly and only affirmed, concerning “the first period of our Reformation from Popery.”—And does the Surveyor reckon, that the matter then in controversy was not a proper object of coercive laws? Is he for repealing the penal statutes against Papists?
private judgment to parliament-members,—as to what they should bestow public countenance and encouragement upon in the Church-state; yet what objectors are of the opinion, that this Revelation is a proper subject of parliamentary cognizance?

7. As to the direct establishing of the Confession of Faith, by the Revolution-Parliament*; he writes as follows (p. 19.) viz. “When the Parliament was to establish a system of doctrine in the realm, in what other way could they go to work than they actually did? They were not to renounce their own judgment, in compliment to the judgment of the General Assembly; and implicitly to ratify what the Assembly had determined, merely because the Assembly had so determined. How then could they, as reasonable men, proceed otherwise; than by reading, voting, and approving what they were to establish?”—Indeed, when the Parliament would not satisfy themselves with granting protection and security to the Church;—in her professing the system of gospel-doctrine; but would assume a public or parliamentary judgment thereof, unto a direct establishing of it by themselves: In such a case, such vile reasoning may have room. But would the Parliament have acted “implicitly,” not “as reasonable men,”—by granting the said protection and security to the Church; upon being satisfied, in their private judgments severally, about the propriety of her profession? Or would they thus (as he expresses it p. 20.) “have egregiously prostituted their authority?”

8. It immediately follows: “If they had authority to establish one profession of religion for the whole nation, and to make all the subjects one national Church; it was surely their business to be well satisfied, that the religion to be professed was true and scriptural.”—No doubt this was their business: And might they not be well enough satisfied, in their private judgment? Had they no other way of being satisfied, but by assuming one of the keys of the kingdom of heaven,—for a judicial cognizance of doctrine? Then it must be in the same manner, that persons of any secular state or calling are to exert the influence which it gives them in behalf of religion; no way according to their private judgment as Christians.—Besides, is there no difference betwixt these two; an establishing a national profession of religion, and a compelling all the subjects to embrace it (p. 20.) “by the terror of civil penalties†?”

9. He proceeds thus (p. 21.): “Could the Church warrantably sit down on any legal establishment whatever, supposing it to have been as good and perfect as any human establishment could be? I deny it.”—But who ever before used or understood the terms of sitting down on a legal establishment, as if they meant a making that establishment the foundation and rule of

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*p. 263.  † p. 322, 323.
faith and manners; or otherways than as they mean an embracing of the protection and security which it gives, in a Christian profession*?

10. He compleats this invective on a high key, and all in capitals (p. 21.): “That a Church built upon tradition, former reformations, acts of civil settlements, or any thing human, is not the Church of Christ, so far as she does so, but a building of men.”——But, as to those against whom he now debates, have they ever given him any occasion to suppose; that they are for having any of these things which he speaks of building upon, substituted into the place of the foundation laid in Zion*.

III. That New Scheme which the Surveyor has broached on this subject, is now to be laid open.—As hath been observed, in the beginning of this section; he is for having everything “which relates to the kind and manner of settling religion in Scotland by acts of Parliament” (good and bad, in days both of Reformation and Defection), “thrown entirely out of the controversy!” And he imagines, that this controversy would have been “managed on all sides in another manner than it has been,—had these plain truths” (just the two particulars last quoted in the foregoing article!) “been duly attended to.” Thus he immediately adds (p. 21.): “Instead of idle comments upon acts of Parliament, in order to prove that they were pure at one period and impure at another, proper at one period and Erastian at another; we should have seen the Independence and constitution of the Christian Church explained and defended, upon principles that have no relation to the purity and propriety of any legal security by Parliament whatsoever.”

Here, indeed, is thorough work! As if it belonged to the Independency and constitution of the Christian Church,—that she should have no manner of business with civil powers, nor they with her, in the matter of legal security; and that all their actions in this case, good and bad, should be considered as a matter of moonshine. Accordingly it is his principle (p. 21.), that “a Church—by becoming national,” (or, what only he can mean, by the body of a nation becoming Church-members); she is not “any way altered from the plan of the Apostolic Churches.” And this is explained by his telling (p. 17.), that “the utmost ambition of Christians on this point,” as to their concern with civil powers, “should be confined to this;” that under them they may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty:” So that, in their Church-capacity, they are to have no more concern with Christian than with Heathen rulers,—even none at all; aiming at nothing more than common peace and protection equally from rulers of either sort, in their several private situations.

IV. The

*p. 335, 336.
IV. The wicked import and effect of this New Scheme, is next to be considered. And,

1. It means an abolishing of all scripture-precepts, promises and prophesies; about the state of the gospel-church, with regard to civil powers.—For, according to this scheme, Kings are not to be wise now, nor are the judges of the earth to be instructed; that they should serve the LORD, the King upon the holy hill of Zion! The Kings of Tarshish and of the Isles should not bring presents, the Kings of Sheba and Seba should not offer gifts to him; as appearing in his kingdom of the visible Church: No Kings, in their kingly state, should fall down before him; no Nations, in their national state, should serve him! It is to be of no consequence to the Church, that the LORD hath said; Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their Queens thy nursing-mothers! Nor is it to be admitted of, according to any intelligible use of the words; that the kingdoms of this world should become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ!

2. This New Scheme is for abolishing all obligation upon Christians to manage their secular callings and advantages in a way of homage to the LORD CHRIST; or in a subordination and subservience to his interests and glory: Though he should in all things have the pre-eminence.—They are called, whatsoever they do, in every station and business of life, to do all to the glory of God; who can be glorified, only through Christ Jesus. As it is from him that they are to have a blessing on their civil interests; so it is unto him that they should live, in a Christian and conscientious management of all these. Whatever opportunity and power any Christian man has, from his civil station,—for favouring or promoting the interests of Christ in the gospel-church, so as may be still agreeable to her nature; he should reckon it his chief business thus to improve the same, in opposition to a heathenish way of managing the concerns of that station: And this must be principally incumbent on civil rulers, from the principal measure of their opportunity and power.—But the Surveyor is for having them both excused and excluded from every thing of this nature: So that, though they profess to be Christians; yet, through the whole of their public administration, they are to behave with utter indifferency about the interests of Christ and of the Christian Church,—as if they were a set of Heathens.

3. This new Scheme is for abolishing all seriousness, among men, about religious matters; with all their rights concerning the same.—For it is impossible that they can be truly serious about religion, or the privileges of a Church-state; without inclining to use their best influence in behalf thereof: And if they have any right at all, concerning these privileges; they must be entitled, respectively, to give and get the best external protection and security, in the enjoyment of them.—To ascribe such independence or spirituality
An Examination of a late Survey. Appendix III.

spirituality to the visible Church on earth, as should make that protection and security incompetent to her constitution,—is but to amuse the world with an unscriptural, an irrational, an hypochondriac Theory. And to imagine that civil rulers professing religion, should not use their power and influence in behalf of the religion which they profess,—or that they can otherwise put a due value upon it, and be truly in earnest about it; this is one of the Surveyor’s chimerical notions,—which never was, nor can be, nor ought to be exemplified in the world! Such a project for breaking up all intercourse between Church and State, where civil rulers are Christians, is altogether visionary and absurd; as much as if he were to insist for having the two Tables of the Moral Law, or all spiritual and earthly concerns, yea the souls and bodies of living men,—thrown out from all mutual connection and influence.

4. This new Scheme is for abolishing all sense of the LORD’s great goodness; in his spiriting and determining our rulers, once a day, to seek and promote the good of the House of the LORD our God,—to exert themselves in behalf of our Covenanted Reformation. For, according to the Surveyor, no acknowledgment should be made of all this to the glory of God; as what would be but dealing in a foolish dispute,—in “idle comments upon Acts of Parliament!”

5. This new Scheme is for abolishing all sense of the LORD’s controversy, on account of what civil powers have done against his work in these lands. Even all that they have done wickedly in the sanctuary, when they did break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers,—and with a concurrence of all ranks in their wickedness; all this, according to the Surveyor, is to be made no account of: The Lord cannot plead a controversy for the same, without patronizing a foolish dispute,—“idle comments upon Acts of Parliament!”—And to all this horrid issue he has driven matters, for ridding himself of an embarrassment about the authorising mentioned in some Burgess-oaths.

V. For clearing the principles of the Associate Synod, and of all the reformed Churches, with regard to civil Establishments of religion,—in opposition to the Surveyor’s scheme; the following particulars may be considered. As,

1. In all public administrations, concerning revealed religion and the Church-state; civil rulers are to act, only according to the private judgment which belongs to them as Christians.—It is inconsistent with their place, and with the privileges of the Church, as also with the nature of revealed truths and institutions; that they should assume a public judgment, or a judicial cognizance of these matters. But as every man is to employ the talents of his station in favour of religious interests, upon being fully persuaded in his own mind; civil rulers especially are to do so:

They
They are first to be satisfied, each *in his own mind*, as Christians,—about what method of religion and Church-order appears best to them, for having public countenance and encouragement; and to proceed accordingly.

2. It is not *religion itself*, in the system of revealed truths and ordinances, to which the civil power can properly give an establishment or ratification; while these can derive no additional credit or authority from men: But it is the *profession* thereof to which that establishment belongs; as giving protection and security to the subjects in making the same.—And all reasoning, in the present case, to the contrary, (about “the system of doctrine, worship, government and discipline of the Christian Church,” being “embodied into the laws of the state”); is but the language of slander and nonsense: While only the just privilege of the subjects, as guarded against molestation or danger in their most valuable interests, doth become so embodied.

3. No such establishment can properly be given to any Church in her profession, as may be “to the prejudice of others in their civil rights.”—It is inconsistent with the nature of a religious profession, that men should be engaged in it by compulsion: And this would be the case, in a greater or lesser degree; were they to forfeit any rights to which they have a natural claim, by their standing off from the established profession. The establishment now spoken of, is to be considered as a bestowing of additional privileges upon some; not as a detracting from the natural and common privileges of any.

4. The civil power cannot justly take upon him, concerning the Church, any thing that interferes with her spiritual nature and privileges; or with her *sole dependence* on the LORD JESUS CHRIST, as her alone King and Head, in respect of all her peculiar and intrinsic concerns. Yet, in a full consistency herewith, he can have great influence upon her; as to the maintenance of truth and pure administrations, on the one hand,—with the suppressing of errors and corruptions, on the other: Beside what is immediately competent to him, with regard to such errors and practices as manifestly affect the common good of society.—If it be competent to any private Christian, to say to Archippus, *take heed to the ministry which thou has received*; it cannot but be competent to the civil power, when Christian, to deal so with the judicatories of the Church: And to enforce this dealing by the great encouragements and discouragements, or by the effectual countenance and discountenance which are natively in his power; without committing any violence upon mens natural rights. And though the bestowing of temporal encouragements or advantages upon the Church, has been often carried too far,—unto a corrupting of her officers and ordinances; yet this says nothing against such a measure thereof, as is truly serviceable to

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the interests of religion: While the civil power can also refuse or withdraw these, as they appear undeserved; without any encroachment on their natural privileges.

5. The civil power cannot justly take upon him to judge any man’s principles or profession, in matters of revealed religion; so as to inflict any punishments, or deprive of any natural rights,—on account of error or corruption in such matters, which are the object of a spiritual jurisdiction. As to all temporal jurisdiction, about mens natural rights or privileges,—the civil power is to proceed only upon natural, not upon revealed principles; so that they should enjoy common protection, just according as they are found to be loyal and peaceable subjects.

6. In all public or magistratical administrations, which do not affect mens natural rights or privileges,—the civil power, when Christian, is to proceed upon revealed as well as natural principles. He is to exercise his Christian judgment of discretion, as to his countenancing or discountenancing of any,—in the matter of their religious principles and profession; as to what particular Church-state should be favoured with legal securities and privileges: And as to what persons should be intrusted with places of power under him, for the public good of ecclesiastical as well as of civil society. In all which, he encroaches upon no man’s birth-right; but only maintains a good conscience, about a proper subserviency of his power to the kingdom of JESUS CHRIST*.

7. The above are general and comprehensive principles, which the reader is left to enlarge upon and apply; while there is not room for doing so, in this place. It shall only be further observed,—that a proper answering of duty in this matter has been, and is still like to be, a very rare thing among civil rulers: Civil establishments of religion have seldom been properly executed; while errors and corruptions in the Church, have most ordinarily had the countenance of law. But wherever these rulers shall exert themselves, according to the principles which have been expressed; this will always be found sufficient,—even for serving all the purposes which have been ascribed to their administrations about religion, in the Confessions of any of the reformed Churches: Without ever using any such compulsive methods as belong not to their place, and agree not to the nature of Christianity.

**Section X. Of the Surveyor’s flimsy Account of his own Party.**

The performance now under consideration, is concluded (p. 107,—112) with “some account of the proceedings of the Burgher-Synod.”—The Surveyor speaks with a sneer

(Preface,

*Compare what is said on this subject, Vol. I. p. 311, 312, 313.
(Preface, p. 11.), of “the Antiburghers having done many remarkable things;” among which he mentions their proceedings in the case of “Mr Thomas Mair, for holding what they call an Arminian tenet.” By which words he adopts, for himself and his party,—all that opposition to the truth of the gospel, against which the Synod was contending in the said case. Nor is it any wonder, that a man who has trampled upon all proper profession of Christianity,—should also trample upon the matter of this profession.

He enters upon his “account of the proceedings of the Burgher-Synod” with a pert observation, which he ridiculously intends for their praise: “Their history is concise, and the particulars few.” Yet he had more consulted their credit, had he omitted the “concise history” which he gives of them: For it all consists of steps by which they have proceeded in their course of backsliding from the Secession-Testimony; as to which he presumes to affirm, that “upon this ground the Burghers have obtained help of God to continue unto this day.”——Some account is now to be taken, of the “few particulars” which he relates. And,

I. Having mentioned a “letter to the Antiburgher-Ministers,—wrote in an extrajudicial capacity,—in the name and with the consent and desire of all the Burgher-Ministers,” at their Synodical meeting in June 1747; “desiring a friendly meeting with them, for prayer and conference upon the subject of their present differences;” He adds, “this measure was unsuccessful.” And no wonder; nor is it imaginable that they ever projected any success of “this measure,” such as he means.——For, as was observed in one of the answers to the said letter; “they have plainly interwoven with their proposal—an assertion of their Synodical constitution, a justification of their conduct in the present affair, and a condemnation of the Associate Synod;” So that the proposal could not be got embraced by “the Antiburgher-Ministers” on any equal terms; or otherways, than at the manifest expence of renouncing all that the Lord had been enabling them to do,—in behalf of the genuine constitution of the Associate Synod, and of his cause among their hands. But the measure was well enough projected, for another sort of success among the people: Who only heard of it in general, as a peaceable measure; without knowing the terms upon which it proceeded.

II. Some people, first in three, and then in other three congregations belonging to Ministers of the Associate Synod,—having been so far misled, as to put themselves under the conduct of “the Burgher-Synod;” the Surveyor gives an account of this Synod’s coming forward, in May 1748, to “grant supply of preaching” to these people,—“notwithstanding they had not proceeded
“proceeded to inflict any ecclesiastic censure upon” the Ministers of the said congregations: And he mentions some reasons which they gave for this procedure; just a summary of those reproaches cast upon the Synod, which have been already considered.

He also gives some reasons, unworthy of any particular consideration,—why they proceeded “to grant these supplies, without previous censure.” But as the separating brethren did, by letters from their Moderator, require all the Ministers of the Associate Synod to attend their meeting last mentioned; it is remarkable, that they claimed a right and power for inflicting censure upon all these Ministers: Though, as the Surveyor says, his “Synod did not judge it expedient to proceed in that manner against them; while things stood as they then did, and have since continued to stand.”—And so he maintains the claim of the twelve separating brethren, to a power of jurisdiction and discipline over the nineteen Ministers who remained in the Associate Synod*!

III. He informs, that “a pro-re-nata meeting was held at Stirling in October 1747; when the Synod made an Act, declaring the nullity of the pretended Synod that first met in Mr Gib’s house in Bristow near Edinburgh, April 10, 1747.” But there is no occasion for enlarging on that audacious step of the twelve separating brethren†; as all their reasons for it have been fully refuted in the preceding part of this examination.

IV. Having given an account of their proceeding to “grant supply of preaching,” within the congregations of some of the Ministers who continued in the Associate Synod; he proceeds as follows, viz. “From that time nothing remarkable happened, till November 8, 1753; when the Synod passed an [Act, containing a narrative of the rise, progress and grounds of their Secession; Together with a declaration of the true scope and design thereof; as also of their Act, Declaration and Testimony, for the doctrine, worship, discipline and government of the Church of Scotland; and of their Bond for renewing our Solemn Covenants.] In this Act it is proved, that the Secession was only made from corrupt judicatures and administrations in the Established Church; but not from her principles and constitution!”

This is that infamous Act to which the Surveyor appeals, as an authority for supporting his false doctrine about the Secession-Testimony; which has been considered in the seventh section.—After some account of the rise of the Secession, the Act mostly consists in a new edition of the extra-judicial Testimony; as to that part of it which contains the reasons of the Secession. But the first section of that Testimony, containing some historical observes‡, by which an entrance was made upon a further enlargement of the Secession-Testimony,—is there wholly omitted: The design being, to take down this Testimony to a compliance

* p. 81. † p. 89. ‡ p. 383.
with Burgess-oaths; as if it had never been carried a bit further, than a
testifying against the corrupt managements of the present judicatories.

It then contains a strange huddle of loose quotations; from the
*State of the Process* against Mr Erskine, the *Representations* to the
Commission in August 1733, the *Review* of the Commission’s
narrative, the *Extra-judicial Testimony*, the *Reasons of Non-accession*,
and the *Declinature*: Gathering together, into several heaps, a great
number of expressions in these papers,—about *our excellent, our
beautiful Presbyterian Constitution*; but mostly about *Ordination-vows*,
and *engagements*, as the first Seceding Ministers did plead upon their
adherence to the same*.——And all this is for proving, what no mortal
ever denied: That “the Judicial Testimony and Bond” is not “a
renouncing and abjuring of the true religion professed and settled in
this nation,” not “a Secession from the true religion;” and that the
Secession was “not a secession from the Revolution-Church in her very
constitution, considered in her excellent constitution and standards;”——
not a secession from the Protestant religion and Presbytery! But the
chicanery of all the reasonings in that Act, from the above topics, has
been sufficiently exposed in the *seventh section* of this Examination.

As

*One may well be astonished at the ado which has been made, the dust
which has been raised, and the sophistical nonsense which has been uttered,—about
these *Ordination-vows* and engagements; in the act now referred to, and in the
Surveyor’s vapourings upon that subject. At the same time, it might justly provoke
a warm indignation through the whole Secession-body,—to find themselves so
basely trifled with and abused; in an attempt to disgrace and nullify the
Reformation-Testimony among their hands, by dressing it out into the false and
pitiful form of a Testimony for an Act of Assembly 1711,—and for the first clause
of a few Burgess-oaths!

To any who consider the *Judicial Testimony*, and the new *Formula* soon
afterwards agreed upon,—it must be perfectly plain; that the first Seceding
Ministers came to look on the form of their Ordination-vows, according to the said
act of Assembly 1711, as being both *defective* and *culpable*: Just so far as they
stated and enlarged the matter of their Testimony, differently from and beyond the
matter of the *Formula* prescribed in that act (p. 384.). But as the case of these faults
and defects, could no way invalidate the ministry which they had received; as little
could it bind them up from considering themselves as under all the obligation by
their Ordination-vows which has been explained, (p. 387, 388.): While that
obligation did not merely turn upon the terms of the said *Formula*; but also upon
the nature and duties of the ministry which they then received from the Lord, under
these Solemn Vows for fulfilling it.
As to the Judicial Testimony, great indignity is done to it in the said act; by a cold account of it in eighteen lines, being a vain attempt for subjecting it to Burgess-oaths.—An expression is first caught at in the Introduction (which was the deed of one member), about engagements at their Ordination. And three passages are then picked out of that Testimony, (as if favourable to the Burgher-cause!)—complaining of the Act 1732, for the power which it gave to heritors “disaffected to the Government both in Church and State*;” asserting “the doctrine, worship, government and discipline of this Church†:” And approving all the acts of Assembly from 1638 to 1650, and since that time; in so far as they were past for advancing and carrying on a Covenanted Reformation, agreeable to the word of God, and the received principles and constitutions of this Church‡.” But the matter specially accounted of in it is, the declaration of adherence which it bears to some former papers,—the Representations, the Extra-Judicial Testimony, and the Reasons of non-accession ||; according to the aforesaid improvement of quotations from these papers, for trampling all down into the mould of Burgess-oaths.

All this unworthy usage of the Judicial Testimony is aggravated, by stating it in a subserviency to the Formula and questions 1711; which are recorded in the said act at full length. And the adherence to that Testimony, now required among the friends of this act, when using the Associate Presbytery’s Formula, is with the following new qualification; in the true scope, end and design thereof: Evidently referring to the treatment which it gets, as a sort of eye-sore, in the act now considered.—But there is no need of insisting further here on this subject, after what has been said in the seventh section already referred to.

V. The last particular of his “concise history” is as follows, viz. “Thereafter, in March 1755, the Synod agreed to publish a [draught of an Overture; relative to some historical mistakes alleged to be in the Act, Declaration and Testimony,—Answers by the Associate Presbytery to Mr Nairn’s Reasons of Dissent,—and in the Acknowledgment of Sins prefixed to the Bond.] This Overture has never yet passed into an act.” Such is all the account that he gives of this shameful affair; which is now to be explained.

According to the Introduction of this Overture, the Synod of the Separating Brethren began the work very early,—of making such an attack upon the several deeds therein mentioned: For, though the Overture was not passed as such till March 1755, it had been lying before them from September 1751; in consequence of their having appointed a committee, “some years ago,” to make...
make search for the pretended mistakes in these deeds. And before appointing this Overture to be published, they “gave the said draught a reading; and made some corrections and amendments thereon:” But they “resolved it should be published in the form of an Overture; that all persons concerned might have time to make their observations deliberately, and propose their difficulties if they had any, before it should be turned into the form of an Act.”

This Overture is not more singular in the matter of it, than in the manner of giving it out.—For it was not transmitted by them to their inferior Judicatories, that these might give a return upon the subject,—according to Barrier-acts, which have been so loudly talked of on that side; but which were, in this case, utterly disregarded. It was given out to the world at large, from whom no return could be required; nor does it seem, after the matter has continued in this state near twenty years, that any return was wanted: As if an underhand and perpetual defamation of the deeds thereby abused, had been all the design of the Overture.—But seeing it was thus given out to the world, after undergoing “some corrections and amendments” by that Synod; it is to be considered as expressive of their mind, without any remaining difficulties about it among them. It therefore bears all the meaning and effect, though not “the form of an Act.” So that they continue answerable for all the outrage which is thereby committed upon the Secession-Testimony.

This overture is said to be concerning “some historical mistakes alleged to be in the” papers referred to. Yet not so much as one instance of falsehood or mistake in matter of fact, is really found out in any of them*: But all the mistakes alleged do turn upon a gross perverting of facts and words, as to the effect and meaning thereof; which is plainly the case,—even as to the single instance concerning which they venture to say, this is not fact†.

The

*One historical mistake is pretended to be hit upon! But there was not confidence, as appears, for taking it into the Overture; so that it only lies in a note.—Speaking of the Oath of Allegiance, the author of that note says: “in the Acknowledgment of Sins, this is said to be imposed in the year 1690,—but it is certain fact, that it was in the year 1689 that it was first imposed by authority of Parliament.” Yet he found himself obliged to add, “there is nothing of great consequence in that;” as he was obliged to own, that the first general imposing of it was in the year 1690. Where then is the mistake? And what a shameful evidence, of a desire to find one!

† It is said in the Acknowledgment of Sins, concerning the infamous Act Rescissory 1661, that thereby “all the acts and deeds of

“the
The historical mistakes alleged to be found in these papers, are distinguished into EIGHTEEN PASSAGES,—which are laid under various degrees of censure; the lowest degree being an attempt “to explain some passages,”—so as to commit a manifest violence upon them, or even to explain all proper sense out of them: But all of them are brought into one common state of condemnation. And these passages shall now be fully exhibited; not as they are distinguished in the overture, but according to their order in the papers to which they belong: Notwithstanding a coincidence of several passages in the different papers.

I. The condemned passages in the Judicial Testimony*.

“When the Parliament of Scotland met, immediately after the Revolution,—in the second Session, Anno 1690: Presbyterian Church-government and Discipline is established and ratified, according to the civil ratification and establishment given unto the government of this Church anno 1592. Thus a retrograde motion is made near an hundred years backward: And all the legal securities given to this Church, in that Covenanting period from 1638 to 1650, are over-looked and passed by. Likewise all the acts of the first Session of the first Parliament of King Charles II, together with the infamous Act Rescissory anno 1661, (whereby a Covenanted Reformation was razed, and the acts and deeds of that Covenanting period were declared seditious and treasonable),—are left untouched in this above-mentioned settlement.”

“Prelacy is never considered as contrary to the word of God, and abjured by our Covenants; nor our Presbyterian Church-government and Discipline, as what the land is bound and obliged to maintain by the most Solemn Oaths and Covenants. The indignities done to the national and Solemn League and Covenant, and consequently to the most High God the great party in them, are never regarded; but these Solemn Oaths and Covenants are left buried under an Act Rescissory, and other acts and deeds subversive of them.—This nation did not resent the indignities and injuries done in the former period

“the foresaid Covenanting period were declared null and void.” And they say bluntly, this is not fact: That not all, though the most part of them, were so declared by the said Act Rescissory; some others having been so declared by three preceding acts of the same Session of Parliament. As if that Act Rescissory had not comprehended, as well as completed the wicked matter of these preceding acts!—And it is not a correcting of the said passage in the Acknowledgment of Sins, that the Overture proposes; but a having it quite erased, without any thing in its place!

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“period, to that God whose awful and holy Name was interposed in
these Solemn Oaths and Covenants.”

“Likewise, by the same Parliament, the Oath of Allegiance to the
Sovereign is appointed to be sworn,—in place of any other oaths
imposed by Laws and Acts of preceding Parliaments.—The terms in
which the Act is conceived appear plainly to exclude the Oath of the
Covenant, which contained a very Solemn Test of Allegiance to the
Sovereign.—The Allegiance is substitute in the room of our Solemn
National Covenants; which contain the strictest engagements of duty to
the Sovereign, a most Solemn Renunciation of Popery, and
consequently of all Popish Pretenders whatsoever.”

“It was the laudable practice, in reforming times, to condemn all
steps of defection; and duly to censure such as were guilty of publick
backsliding.”

“The Assembly 1690 did not assert the divine right of Presbytery,
and the intrinsic power of the Church.—Though the King’s
Commissioner dissolved the Assembly 1692, and though their meetings
were adjourned from time to time by the King’s proclamation till the
year 1694; yet there is not any standing Testimony against such sinful
encroachments upon the rights and liberties of Christ’s spiritual
kingdom.”

II. The condemned passages in the Acknowledgment of Sins*.

“When the Estates of the nation were met in a free Parliament in
the year 1690, our Presbyterial Church-government was settled
according to its civil Establishment in the year 1592; and all the steps of
Reformation attained to in that Covenanting period betwixt 1638 and
1650, were neglected and passed by: Yea, in the said settlement of
Presbytery, all that was done against a Covenanted work of
Reformation, in the first session of Parliament of King Charles after his
Restoration, is left untouched; particularly the infamous Act Rescissory,
whereby all the acts and deeds of the foresaid Covenanting period were
declared null and void, is never repealed: Also that impious and wicked
act, the second act of the second Session of the same Parliament,
declaring null and void the proceedings of that faithful Assembly at
Glasgow in the year 1638, and all other acts and deeds of that reforming
period,—stands in the body of our Scots Laws to this very day. And
thus that great work, which the Lord wrought with an outstretched arm
in the days of our fathers, lies still buried under the grave-stone of
several Parliamentary acts and deeds.—Likewise by the same
Parliament in the year 1690, instead of our Covenant-allegiance, which
was judged a proper badge of loy-

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“alty in our reforming periods,—a general oath of allegiance to the Sovereign was imposed.”

III. The condemned passages in the Answers to Mr Nairn, with the subjoined Declaration and Defence*.

“It is soon enough to avouch one’s principles and duty anent a Magistrate, when once that Magistrate has a being in the world: No body can have God’s call to do so sooner; for God never calls to any duty, till he gives occasion for the discharge of it,—that is, till it be an actual duty†.”

“If Mr Nairn means, that the Presbytery cannot renew the Covenant-oath of allegiance to the present Government; this is what they grant, because it is not competent for them to impose oaths in civil matters: Though if the civil government, in a way of supporting Reformation, were again imposing the same allegiance; they would have abundance of freedom to take it.”

“As to the clause in the Solemn League, which binds mutually to preserve the rights and privileges of the Parliament; common sense tells, that this clause can bind only in so far as Providence gives occasion for it. A Parliament in Scotland we have not: And as to the British Parliament, which is a part of the present legislative power; the Presbytery contend not that the Covenant lays them under any obligation with reference thereunto, or that they have any concern therewith,—but what belongs unto the principle which the Presbytery maintains, viz. That we ought to acknowledge the present civil authority over these nations, and to subject ourselves thereunto in lawful commands‡.”

“It is observable that, in Scotland,—the Reformation of the Church hath always (in a beautiful order) preceded and introduced the Reformation of the State||.”

“The


† The Overture-makers are not merely for swearing to maintain a royal succession,—but also for swearing to successors, before they exist!

‡ It was once thought, that the Acknowledging and Subjecting here mentioned,—were sufficiently comprehensive of all imaginable duty toward civil superiors: And it is really odd, that the Overture-makers should have now thought otherwise.

|| The Overture-makers are at pains to make a fault here, where they could find none; by taking Reformation of the Church for the same thing with Acts of Church-judicatories. It is perfectly obvious, that the above passage was intended to distinguish the order of Reformation in Scotland,—from that which took place in England. The quotation of it in the Overture, is with an omission of the words in Scotland.
"The body politic, particularly in Scotland have never [at or since
the Revolution], by their deed of civil constitution,—provided that their
Magistrates be brought under, and admitted upon obligations and terms,
such as were fixed upon and established in reforming periods,
(particularly in the coronation-oath, Annis 1567 and 1649); but such as are,
in many respects, not only different from, but destructive of the
same,—unto the great prejudice of real religion, and reformation in the
house of God: They have never endeavoured to inform their
Magistrates, of their sin and duty in this matter."

"At the Revolution, Prelacy was not abolished as contrary to the
word of God and abjured by our Covenants: The settlement of
Presbytery was according to the former settlement, Anno 1592; and all
the legal securities given to this Church, from 1638 to 1650, were
overlooked; nor was any regard had to the solemn Oaths and Covenants
which we then came under: The wicked laws Anno 1661, condemning
and razing our Covenanted Reformation, were left untouched. A
general oath of allegiance was imposed, plainly excluding the oath of
our Covenants.—By the act 1592, according to which Presbytery was
settled at the Revolution,—the Assembly is deprived of power, where
the King or his Commissioner are present, to nominate and appoint time
and place for their next meeting."

"The question is not,—whether it be lawful for us to swear the
present allegiance to the civil government; which the Presbytery
acknowledge they cannot do: Seeing there are no oaths to the
Government in being,—but what exclude the oath of our Covenants, or
homologate the united constitution*."

"The Presbytery are of opinion, that in regard they had formerly
agreed, That it was not suitable to their present circumstances,—to
blend civil and ecclesiastical matters in the oath of God, in renewing
our Covenants; because that the cognizance of civil affairs belongs not
properly to them as a Church-judicatory; and some members being of
the mind, that the reduplication of the oath upon that clause of the
Confession of Sins which was the occasion of the dissent, would upon
the matter, amount to the foresaid blending: That therefore the said
clause shall be left out†."

These

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* p. 211.

† The Overture-makers are of opinion that a Church-judicatory, by
themselves, may put a clause of civil allegiance into a religious Bond or Covenant;
because our duty to the Sovereign is comprehended in the fifth Command: As if
there were no difference betwixt a swearing of that duty to God, and a swearing of
it to the earthly Sovereign!—See Vol. I. p. 257, 258.
These are the several Passages, which the Surveyor’s Synod have reprobated in their Overture: Doing so by a hotchpotch of worse than “idle comments upon acts of Parliament,” (such as have been considered in the first Appendix of this Volume); and by methods of reasoning obviously so false, so futile,—as may fix a sad reproach upon ingenuity, and intellectual endowments. Thus it is, that they have endeavoured to abolish the Secession-Testimony; so far as it is a Testimony in behalf of our Covenanted Reformation, against the burial of it which has been long taking place: Tending to blind and harden the present generation, with regard to the Lord’s visiting upon them the iniquity of their fathers. And all this is perpetrated, not in any downright manner, but in the disingenuous form of an Overture,—which they have now continued for many years, without either passing it into an Act or throwing it aside.

The concluding paragraph of the Survey bears a pretended say, of one who is called “a very eminent Minister of the other denomination;” symbolizing with the ignorance, insolence and malignity by which the Survey is characterized. Who is the Minister meant, the Writer of this Examination knows not: And if any Minister of the denomination referred to, has ever expressed himself in the alleged manner; it must have been in a private correspondence, now basely exposed to the world. Yet the Surveyor has evidenced no such regard to truth in the other parts of his performance, as that one should give any credit to this part of it on his word.—But if any Minister belonging to the Associate Synod has taken such a method, underhand, of defaming the Lord’s gracious and memorable interposal for the support of the Secession-interest,—in the matter of the present controversy; horribly reproaching the appearance which he has enabled them to make for this interest against the course of the Separating Brethren,—as an Infatuation: Common honesty requires that Minister to repent of such treachery, or to assume a different denomination.

C O N C L U S I O N.

The Survey has now been examined; and so as to overlook nothing in it that can, with any shew of reason, be called material: And let the Surveyor try if he can find out one instance in the whole, of wresting or perverting his language; a practice which is familiar, in his way of dealing with others. There might be need of some apology, for the particularity and length of this Examination; were it not that many are disposed to make a handle of every thing against the Associate Synod, and the cause
cause which they are maintaining: While the Examiner was the rather inclined to deal thoroughly in the present work; because his infirmity and time of life may not allow him to perform any further duty of this sort, in behalf of that cause.

He apprehends no need of an apology, for any severity of language which he has used; as what may be reckoned considerably below the atrocious demerit of the Survey. And the Reader may now judge, if that performance be not fronted with an air of blasphemy; when the gross falsehoods, misrepresentations, invectives and errors of which it is compounded,—are called *The balances of the Sanctuary*.

Notwithstanding all the length which the Surveyor has gone in such abuse, he greatly extenuates the difference between the opposite parties (p. 72. 112.); “that the point wherein they still differ is but speculative,—unoperative upon either heart or life.” But the corrupt managements on his side, for twenty-seven years bygone, bear a sad evidence of the contrary: Nor can a debauchery of principles about the Reformation-cause, be of the unoperative nature that he pretends.

A coalescence of these parties, which he professes to wish, is no doubt an event most desireable; in the only honest method, of both being reassembled to that standard which one of them has deserted: And if the matter of difference were once made up, the forms of a coalescence might easily be adjusted. Yet no probability of such an event, can extend to persons of the Surveyor’s character; which, it is hoped, may prove far from being common among his party: As there must be a singular change of his principles and spirit, before any sober and unprejudiced friend of Zion’s interests would chuse to be of his fellowship.—**But the LORD will seek out his sheep; and will deliver them out of all places, where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.**

THE END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.
Some escapes in this volume, that affect the sense,— are to be corrected as follows, viz.


171. *note* line 2. *for* 2 Thess. ii. 11. *read* 2 Thess. i. 11.

173. *note* *for* Gal. ii. 16. *read* Gal. i. 16.

229. *note* line 1. *read* † John vi. 29. 1 John iii. 23. ‡ Psal. ii.

312 Line 19. *for* article. *read* particular.

316 18. *for* 1745, *read* 1746.

333 22. *after* That *read* as.

343 23. *for* of memory *read* of the memory.

357 15. *for* above *read* about

398 23. *for* any exception, *read* any such exception.

415 28 *for* 1950, *read* 1650.

As to some Mistakes of smaller moment.

Page 26. Line 35. *read* necessary

74. 13. *read* turning

89. 5. *read* into

93. 28. delete sinful

101. 24. *read* being at

104. 12. *read* already

107. 3. *read* ecclesiastical

201. 19. *read* indispensable

213. 27. *read* arbitrary

33. *read* climbed

214. 4. *read* suppressed:

231. *note* 1. 3. *read* published

265. 24. *read* clauses

272. 2. *from the foot, read* said

276. 9. *read* them was

313. *last line, read* (reported)

320. 2. *read* incapacitates

334. 14,15 *read* the manner

366. 2. *read* corrupt

371. 23. *read* be-

388. 10. *read* obligation.

393. 37. *read* hitherto

394 22. *read* always

395 7. *read* Standards are